

The  
Life of Me



Edith Shackelford



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A Canny Mother likes best the work she cannot do  
—that is—the work she must do (whatever  
it be) does not appeal to her imagination.



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TO  
THE MASTERFUL ONE

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# *The* LIFE OF ME

## CHAPTER I

DEAR me! Everything has been in such confusion that only now am I able to think. I am in the "Private Patients' Nursery" in a tiny white iron bed, and I am dressed in a hospital uniform that looks a bit coarse to me. On my left wrist I notice a tag on which is neatly printed the word "Carr." *Carr?* I imagine that may be my name, but I don't see why they feel they must label me. Surely, I don't look like an Izenbaum, an Androvolsky, or a Coffermil!

I just glanced up to see bending over me a lady with floating black clouds on her hat and a white ruche next her face. With her was a good looking gentleman who said brokenly, "Sonny?" Strange he could not read *Carr* on my tag. The lady seemed to be sobbing to herself. They both touched me gingerly, as though I might fade away into a mem-

ory if they patted me too firmly. Just then in came the Head One of the Big White Aprons and the Little White Caps; and grabbing my skirts, she drew me onto her left hand as one might do with a rag doll. Ruddy snipping the palms of my hands with her strong fingers, she exclaimed—right out loud and before everybody, quite as if I were accustomed to large noises—"Wake up here, you young rascal! Say how-do-you-do to your father and your cousin-once-removed." She did not mention what the cousin was removed from. Soon they all left me. Personally, I think I should enjoy something to eat.

One of the young White Aprons just brought me back from a visit with an ill, dreamy sort of lady, who looked up from her pillows wearily as I was unearthed from a bundle of flannels, and said, "Is this it?"

"It certainly is!" briskly answered the White Apron. "This is a fine boy—a regular prize-fighter of a baby."

The dreamy lady looked pained when I yelled,



"You were not especially cordial with your  
Mother, young man."



but she did not make any comments upon me, or take the trouble to start a conversation; she just cried and cried and—cried. I was glad enough when the White Apron took me away, scolding me severely thus: "You were not especially cordial with your mother, young man!"

My Mother—the dreamy lady? I seem to be quite rich. I have a Father, a Mother, a Cousin and a tag-once-removed. But I would trade them all for something to eat. This hospital smells so clean, I fear I shall take cold. Here comes the Head One with a big man dressed in white linens!

"Isn't our new private patient splendid, Doctor?" she observed. If I am so terribly "private," I wish they would let me alone for a while.

"Fine pup," replied the medical giant, poking all of his huge fingers into me near my poor little empty stomach. Wouldn't you suppose a physician would know better than to be so un-gentle, considering I am not his size? The "professional touch" may have its advantages, but I call it rough. I

have gathered from fragments of talk that the big man is the head doctor of the hospital. If he waits for me to return his call before coming here again, I have already seen the last of him, which pleases me.

I fancy I must be somebody in particular, so many people have dropped in to see me to-day. The elevator boy just stuck his head in the door and peeped at me. It is well the Head One did not catch him. All the White Aprons and the White Caps have been in. Most of them think me pretty. Possibly I am, but I feel a bit wrinkled and red in the face. If I ever get anything in my stomach, it may help to tone down the flush.

"How different he looks from the babies in the Free Patients' wards, doesn't he?" flatteringly asked a tall, thin White Apron.

"Sure!" replied the charwoman, who stood in the doorway with a bucket of water when she should have been washing down the stairs. "Sure, ye'd know in a minnit he wasn't a Dago!" It is a good thing the Head One did not catch her!

"Sirel" repetele document...



Quarta



And what bad manners all these people have to be talking about me before myself this way! Do they imagine that because I am a sort of foreigner with no ability to speak their language, I don't understand it? One visitor to-day has interested me greatly. I awoke from a nap to see a stunning young man at the foot of my crib, gazing down at me intently. He has a wonderful smile, and a fine head, too, and amber eyes that twinkle and are deep set. "Hello, old man!" he said to me pleasantly and as though he respected me (different from the rest). "It is a hot day, isn't it?" I did not speak, so he went on in the most friendly way, "How goes the great big world with you? My! but I was glad to hear you cry this morning—you scared me to death for a while!"

Why do you suppose everybody is so aggressively glad to hear me cry? I will do all the crying they want to listen to, if they just give me time. I wonder who this nice man is—the one with the real manners? He is not very old, and he looks foot-ballish to me. He touched my cheek with the back of

his forefinger sweetly, and with the consideration due one gentleman from another (for which I am grateful, after the choppy-sea handling I have had so far!), he said, "Bye-bye, old chap—I'll see you to-morrow!"

What is to-morrow? Oh, yes—I think I know.

I have found out who he is—he of the amber eyes and blue serge. All I had to do to find out was to wait. He is Mother's Special Physician. He calls me "Bill" and he can make his straw hat go round and round on his finger. Very nice. I heard someone say my real name is Richard, but that I am to be called Dicklet. But Bill suits me very well as the Doctor says it.

There is a sameness to hospital life, and after many days that could not be told apart from other days, we are leaving this afternoon.

Like most well-regulated hospitals, ours is in the Slums, and when we came out to get in the carriage that Father had waiting for us, we found gathered on the steps and about the horses dozens of little Slumists, all eyes and curiosity. Cousin Martha

carried me (I found out she is Mother's cousin), and I caught several remarks upon how interesting she looked in her deep mourning with the wee white bundle of me in her arms. Everybody turned out to say goodbye, and we drove off in style, let me tell you.

Rumor must have got in ahead of us at the apartment house. They say that rumor often gets in ahead of one. The hall boys and the janitor and his family were all hanging around the entrance to the building, ready to look us over, and to extend a welcome if we came up to their expectations.

"He sure is a fine baby, Mis' Carr, and we sure is glad to see you-all back!" said Charley, as he sent his car flying to the seventh floor.

In our apartment, Blanche had everything just shining to greet Mother, who seemed to appreciate it in her tired way, remarking sadly that she felt as though she had been gone a thousand years. I like Blanche! She is a loving little daisy. "Puddins!" she confided to me affectionately, "we-all is goin' ter be so happy!"

The janitor has just been up to call on me, all beams, in spite of the fact that the tenants are not expected to have babies—dogs and children not being allowed in this building.

Aunt Catherine and her brand new husband are in New York on their honeymoon, and they came here to-day. Aunt Catherine is Mother's lovingest sister. We were all delighted at seeing them, but we got too excited, and when they were gone, Mother's Special Physician leaned forward on the brass railing at the foot of Mother's bed, and with the amber eyes narrowed a little and the strong jaw set in annoyance, he said, "I think it advisable you should go a little slow on society for awhile, Mrs. Carl!"

"Yes, Doctor," Mother replied, meekly.

Naturally, I do not pretend to know my Mother very well, for we haven't been friends long, but I venture to say that my Mother is not meek with many people.

Angst Catherine is Malen's longest sister.





## CHAPTER II

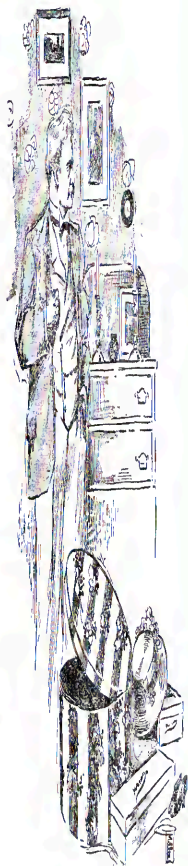
THERE has been so much going on—dear me! Our little apartment where we have been but a week or so, now is filled up with trunks and we seem to be going somewhere for the summer. Cousin Martha and Father keep telling my Mother not to worry. They urge her to lie down and trust them to see that everything is all right. I should judge from the two purple-red spots on Mother's cheek bones that she finds it hard to lie down and trust someone else; and from her almost pathetic effort not to say anything sharp, I should infer that Mother argues it is a mistake to leave one's packing until three hours before train time. Our Special Physician came in this morning, and stepping over boxes and around packing cases, he found his way to the foot of Mother's bed. The two spots on Mother's cheeks did not escape his practiced eye.

"Why don't you stop worrying, Mrs. Carr?" he demanded, with what I felt to be a flattering intimation he knew Mother very well. I thought he might well have applied his excellent suggestion to himself, for he looked worried too.

As for me, I did not move. I am glad enough to stay still when they will let me. You see, Cousin Martha has been bathing me for the last few days, and it is nervous work for us both. In the first place we have a rubber tub that shuts up, and the ladies have not yet learned how to fasten the legs so that I may be spared the uncomfortable feeling that each minute the tub is going to collapse and drown me, flood the floor, sink the ceiling of the apartment below, and prove the last straw to my tired Mother.

Cousin Martha cries all night instead of sleeping—I know, you see, because I wake up at queer times and see the light in her room. She isn't used to little people like me, and she seems to think I am going to vanish, or crack, or stiffen out and die on short notice. Really, there isn't anything peculiar about persons

Die zu den ersten Zeiten der Welt  
gehörte die





of three weeks' age, except that we are indefinite, limber, and in consequence, slippery. The Big White Aprons handled me most pronouncedly, and at the time I did not like it, but on the whole it is safer treatment than being handled as though one were an intangible nightmare, or an egg with a shell as thin as a breath. Especially so where wobbly bath tubs and real water are concerned.

Our daily sieges usually end in Mother's falling back into the pillows, exhausted, in my clinging to whatever rigging is available, and in poor little Cousin Martha's having a fit of hysterics. I suppose they get me clean. I hope it repays them. Personally, I would as soon be left in the degradation of my soft and slightly crumpled gown. When I am older and get a good deal of real dirt and jam on me, and I need baths, I probably shall not be getting more than two a week.

Such a confused day this has been! Here it is the middle of the night, and I lie in my little white canvas bed that they brought from town and hitched

onto the side of Mother's bed, in a house that stands by much water that beats upon cliffs and sands, making even more noise than New York beating upon itself with its own life. Mother's hand just found mine and it recalled the worried expression of Mother's Special Physician's eyes when he saw the purple-red spots on her cheeks. I presume it must have been very trying to Mother to take that wild drive we had in making the train. Why, that drive almost excited me. The way we flew around among the traffic, cut over tracks, and shot under the very frown of complaining automobiles, was a caution. Father held his watch and said they had done a fine job to get ready in time, while Cousin Martha held me tight. There seemed to be strength in her grasp, but it was a kind of automatic strength, for I felt the spirit of her to be very far off somewhere, suffering. Mother formed a dejected heap of pains of various kinds, and I could feel that she was more or less numb—her hands moving only when necessary, and her mind working not at all.

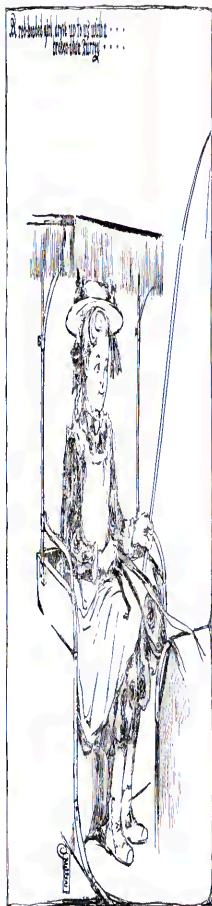
Finally we got out of the carriage and walked to the boat, and it was a long way for all of us, except me. The responsibility of me lay heavy in Cousin Martha's arms. And Father was distressed because no invalid chair could be found for Mother, who showed in her expression that the world was slipping out from under her. I began to howl, and Cousin Martha carried me up and down the ladies' cabin, utterly oblivious of the stares of the other passengers, who openly showed their interest in her. Some of them whispered things about what a shame it was for her to have been left with a tiny baby on her hands! This revived Mother sufficiently to feel a touch of jealousy, for she got no notice at all—and she was the Mother of me.

If the New York station seemed long to us, there are no words to express the feeling of length that came to us, as we trudged the Staten Island sheds to the funny little local train. I was concerned about Mother, who was walking like a machine. Seeing into her mind as I do, and having my own private

method of reading it, even better than she does herself, I was aware that she was practically unconscious.

We passed many real rocks and saw several real trees, and got a whiff of real air now and then, in spite of the smoke that came into the car. They kept the cinders out of my blinking eyes, which gave them an opportunity to enjoy my eye-lashes, which they told each other, were long and dark. My eyes, I think are blue, though so long as one can see with his eyes it would seem as though the color ought to make no difference. Also, I don't look so "goopy" as some persons of helpless age, and I can hold up my own head, which signifies that I am either lighter on brains than most persons so young, or that I am smarter than the average.

Well, after many jarrings, we got out at our station, where a red-headed girl drove up to us with a limping, sluggish, old horse and broken-down surrey. The prominent ribs of the horse indicated to me that his food was not properly pasteurized. As we drowsily ambled past the village saloon which was run by the





father of Miss Red Hairs, the old man sang out, "Ach Mina! you drife dat horse easy on dis hot day, py Gott!" The cloud in my Mother's eyes drifted a little to one side. I think she would have smiled, if she could have freed herself from the conviction that she owed it to the others to do so. But that poor little smile, having stood for an instant by the side of duty, died right there. I fancy my Mother does not like duty.

And now we are in a house that has been shut up for days in the damp sea air, and it is cold and musty. My Mother is fretting, and there seems to be a fire, a very large, wild fire starting in her soul. I fear she may not be able to get up in the morning. I cannot see my Mother, but I feel those purple-red spots on her cheeks, only now they are redder and more purple than they have been before. And there is great pounding of the waters against the shore, and there are still greater poundings in my Mother's brain. Everybody but Mother and myself is fast asleep.

This morning I heard my Mother say to Cousin

Martha, quite calmly, that she thought she was going to die. But I don't believe she is, because the moment Father went in haste to telephone for her Special Physician, she lost the sinking sensation that was so strong in her that it upset me, too. And an hour later Mother remarked that she preferred her pink negligée to her blue one—it was more becoming. I was very glad there was some momentous question such as this for my Mother to decide—I believe it just averted a crisis. While all the excitement was going on, a big black thing with four legs came up to my canvas bed, and sniffed—right in my face. I was wind-milling at the time (throwing my arms around, you understand, and kicking out to get a bit of exercise), and I daresay I frightened the beast, for, after a few more sniffs, he walked off, disgusted that he had been effectually bluffed, no doubt. This was another thing that helped to pull my Mother back to a safe hold on Life. "Blanche!" she called, leebly, "Blanche, you must keep this rented dog out of here—I cannot abide dogs!" I inferred that

Today's **main** **idea** at the line





our inventory included a dog—possibly we could not have got the place without him.

Blanche came in, grinning as usual, and grabbed the cur by the collar, saying, "Mis' Carr, de groc'y man do say dis here dog am a reg'lar debble of a dog, an' named Bill. He already done killed off ev'y cat fer miles, an' all de neighb'hood dogs is tore up more or less, an' peddlers am plum scared to del' of him!" Mother was too weak to reprove Blanche for her use of a swearing word, and anyway, she wouldn't have had time, for Blanche rattled on, "Mis' Carr, dey am a great big hat up in de attic. Kin I borrer it, please mam? You see, a person gits so darf walking out in de hot sun ob dese here roads!"

From odd bits of things, I have gathered two items: that in renting this cottage we rented also a dog named Bill, and that all the water has to be hand-pumped from a well under the kitchen to a tank in the attic. Blanche has at this early date given it out that "she ain't-a-goin'-ta pump no mo'.

water—she promised St. Paul she wouldn't!" I was relieved to hear this, for it gave me hope of getting rid of my bath. But no! Cousin Martha went down herself and pumped up water enough, getting her muscle in good shape before taking it out on me. I was terrified at her vehemence, and I clung to her black waist with my little desperate wet hands, while she called out to Mother, "How soon do you suppose we can take this child into the ocean?" You ought to have heard me yell at that suggestion!

In a few days they got Mother up and helped her down onto the big porch, for my Artist Uncle was coming, and Mother was giving signs of serious boredom at being kept in bed. Besides, although she did not mention it to anyone, still I knew she could no longer endure the sound of the motor boats that chug-chugged by all the time—the beating noise they made reminded her of the way the chloroform beat in her head not long ago. The similarity seemed to fill her with horror and she could not stand

it in the close quarters of her room. And so my Mother went to the porch and fell into a big chair next to my carriage. She felt more old than ever, but still she appreciated the lovely colors of the waters and the sky, after the sun was gone, leaving its only light on a sail miles out at sea. The bay as it looked then recalled a painting of my Artist Uncle's and when he arrived (and had acknowledged that I compared favorably with his own son of helpless age), Mother told him that only now while sitting here had she been able to realize that anything so lovely as his picture, "Evening" ever existed in reality.

"You will find," drawled my droll Artist Uncle, "that every once in a while Nature gets around to Art!"

But even this little bit of diversion was too much for Mother, and she lay awake all night long, while her nerves tortured her to the verge of insanity, and there was great pain at the base of her brain. I was awake wind-milling, myself, much of the time, and I, too, could hear the heavy waters beating upon the

rocks and the sands. I, too, was conscious that as the waters beat, so also beat waves of pain in my Mother's soul. I could hear her thoughts, and if she had not been an ill lady, I should have been shocked and greatly hurt.

"There is no use trying to deceive myself!" some wicked spirit was saying in her mind. "I am not happy—I can never be happy! I never wanted to be anybody's mother! It does not run in our family to care for our mothers. There has been war between the mothers and the children for generations, and it will be so—always. This never should have come to me. It is a merciless trial to both the child and myself, and it is all wrong. I wish I were dead. I wish—I wish I could wake in the morning to find—" Just here I stopped breathing and lay still, it was so awful. "I wish," that evil spirit was whispering to my Mother again, "I wish—God hear me!—I wish I should wake in the morning to find that this child was gone!"

I went on wind-milling once more. Everything

I never wanted to be anybody's mother!





was painfully quiet, except for the waters pounding on the rocks and the sands, and the suffering pounding in my Mother's brain. I was too sorrowed for my Mother to feel hurt for myself, but as I have not yet learned the up-grown's ways of communicating with each other, I hardly knew how to express my sympathy for my crying Mother.

At last it occurred to me to cough very gently, which I did. Instantly her eyes stopped their wild staring into the night, and she turned to my canvas bed with difficulty. Tenderly, she sent her sensitive hand all over me to see that the little blankets were well up, and then she got one of my hands. I went on wind-milling, except for this one hand which I let her have in hers. I let it lie there peacefully and lovingly, while the rest of me wriggled and tossed and kicked and wind-milled. It was far too dark to see, but I feel more than most up-grown persons ever see, and so it was that I knew scalding tears were falling on the purple-red spots on my Mother's cheeks.

And after a while the night outside the east window turned to hopeful tints of gray, and then to many and marvelous shades of blue. Soon there were daring lights of gold and red streaking the blues, and I heard a little land bird sing, and something flew by in a hurry—I think it was a sea-gull. And my Mother was asleep.

## CHAPTER III

THERE seems to be a good deal of "snooping" going on in this place. The edict has gone forth that I am to be put in my bed and let stay there, howling or no howling; but I have remarked that Mother comes up stairs at odd moments to see if I am covered, and through the open windows I sometimes catch Cousin Martha's voice saying she thinks she will run up to her room for her handkerchief—but really, it is only an excuse to come in here to see me. When they are at dinner, I often hear the bell rung twice for Blanche, who is supposed to be in the kitchen, but who has sneaked up here to kiss my hands. Not infrequently the odor of tobacco can be detected on my cheeks, which, by some persons, might be regarded as damaging circumstantial evidence against Father. And several times lately, I have been waked by rays of delight radiating from three

faces that were leaning over my bed before going to sleep themselves. There seem to be endless fresh air arguments, too. Mother thinks I ought to be hardened, but Cousin Martha maintains that I should not be subjected to "regular typhoons," as she calls the soft sea air that sifts into the room in a straight line sometimes. Father generally ends the discussion by saying he would appreciate it if the ladies would give him a rest. I am sure Father and I are going to be very congenial. But in the meantime I wager I am blown out of this bed some evening!

We've had a guest to-day who says I am a fair looking kid, but he'd rather have me set to work at that everlasting pump than to be broken in himself. Father says he is going to ask all the men he knows to visit us, and having got his victim in a bathing suit which is cool and comfortable, he is going to suggest that they limber up their muscles on the pump before taking a dip. He has succeeded in having the tank filled by this scheme three times so far, but I am wondering if his acquaintance is large

We've had a quest to-day that I am a  
fair looking lad





enough to admit of his bringing a man home with him each time the tank runs dry. Judging from the hard breathing of the visitors, I doubt if the same man ever comes twice.

When Mother and I were on the porch together this afternoon, we saw a beach-combing gentleman filling a sack with drift wood from our private sands—which, incidentally, seem to be about as private as I was when we lived at the hospital. Bill saw him first, and dashed for him, growling, snarling and threateningly showing his teeth. The only escape the infuriated, menacing animal allowed the panic-stricken wood-picker was the open sea, which exit did not seem to appeal to him. He struck at the dog and threw sticks, and tried to protect himself by a kind of South Sea dance behind his sack. At last he caught sight of Mother and called to her, "Say, lady, can't you yell to this dog?"

"I could," Mother sang back in friendly tones, "but it would not do a bit of good—he never obeys me."

“Does he bite?” screamed the man.

“The people who know him best say he does, I believe,” sweetly replied Mother.

At this scant comfort the beach-combing gentleman dropped his wood, and making a leap past the dog, he tore for the village, uttering broken language to whom it might concern, as Bill helped himself to a flying trip on one trouser leg.

This is the first time I have seen my Mother smile. The smile was a revelation. My Mother looked young, and I have been thinking of her as being of a thousand years' age. Possibly I can persuade her that I am worth while, though, frankly, until to-day I have been discouraged. But things are more hopeful now—my Mother can smile.

We heard to-day from the fish-peddler who always telephones over to find out if Bill is at home, (if so, where?), before appearing himself, that the owner of our cottage never got out for less than a hundred dollars a year to the veterinary surgeon, and this only covered Bill's own disfigurements. He never

assumed any responsibility for the rest of the wounded. Cat and chicken funerals are common within a radius of five miles of where Bill lives, and most of the dogs in the neighborhood limp, and are pretty well trademarked. But Bill is friends with me. He snoops up to see me as often as the others do, and lays his face against me so that I can feel his breath. Mother isn't especially pleased with having a rented dog, but Father says anything is better than having inadvertently become affiliated with a rented pump.

Mother went in bathing to-day, and Blanche took me down to the sands where we sat on a log—Blanche on the log, and me on Blanche—and watched her. She does not swim, and deep water is dangerous for her. It was high tide and the waves came in with much force. One of them took Mother out beyond her depth, and she shrieked in fright and fought the water at random. She called for Blanche, but Blanche seemed thick of comprehension—and I, an unspeaking person of helpless age! Blanche seemed

to have no idea of the situation, and joyously called back, "Sey, Mis' Carr, don't you-all go out like dat! I'd come along in now, if I was you—cause I ain't no good ter you!"

The next wave brought Mother back, struggling and choking and pale. But I don't think the shock was good for her, because to-night she lies awake again, talking with me in imagination. No words pass between us, but we converse just the same.

"Once I had a dream," she said to me, in thought. "I dreamed that all the hard things of Life, all the unkind things I have ever said and done, all the cruel, horrible things I have ever heard, and all awkwardnesses, together with all my disappointments and failures, were made into a great, heavy black cloak that completely covered me. I dreamed that I wore this cloak for years and years, suffering under the weight of it, until one day I truly loved Life—when, all of a sudden the strangling iron buckle at the throat gave way and the godless garment fell off of me, and I stood out in a lovely white gown—free!" After

this she lay very quiet. I hoped she had gone to sleep, but not!

"Oh!" she sighed. "I am afraid that the freedom is the dream part of my fancy, and the cloak is actual. To-night, I am sure the wrap is made of lead, painted black, and it weighs tons, tons—tons!—and I stagger under it. There is no love in me at all—I don't love Death even, and I have always thought I did. To-day Death and I came near to each other, and I fought to live. I wonder why? I do not want to live! I have you, and I do not want you. You have upset every plan I ever made; you have ruined my health and left me full of agony; you have revolutionized my every theory—you have changed my feeling for everything and everybody in the world. I think I am insane. I tremble from head to foot when I hear the grocery-man's wagon on the road to our place, I hate the grocery-man so. I have never seen the grocery-man, I have only heard his voice. And I hate being anybody's mother! I don't hold it against you—I have sense enough left for that. But

you swing with your whole little weight from my throat, and your little hands cling to that iron buckle that holds me in slavery. I wish you and I would never wake up!"

Poor lady! I think she believes all this, and it hurts her. I don't see how she can get well if she never sleeps, and evil spirits haunt her. And there is Cousin Martha coming into our room each morning, looking a thousand, too, and referring to having no future, having been pelted all night with nasty little what-might-have-beens in her restless dreams, until she tells us she does not know what keeps her from walking off the breakwater into the sea! And worse yet, is my Father's cheerfulness! He tries to be funny and cheer the ladies after his long, hard hours in the sweltering city, and his two hours of tiresome travelling at each end of the day. And when he gets all through with his anecdote, one of the women looks up, absent-mindedly, and says, "I beg pardon, Richard, what was that you were saying? Oh yes! How amusing!"



But you stung with your whole little weight from  
my throat



If anyone were to consult me on the subject, I should be inclined to say that, in my opinion, having a baby is just about as rough on the Father, as anybody. And Blanche is as discontented as anything! She roams up and down the dusty road and says, "Lordy! Ef it wasn't fer Bill, I bet I'd jes nat'ully die in dis here place! Ain't nothin' goin' on none ob de time—not even a hundy-gurdy nowhere! An' de skeeters near-about eat me alive!"

It seems a strange situation to me. I think they like me—why else would they snoop? But everybody is so upset, and the joy of me seems quite lost in distress and boredom. Perhaps the fault lies with the age. Tiny persons are no longer taken in as a matter of course, all in the day's work. Maybe some people receive us politely, but I don't believe anybody asks for us, while janitors and others positively don't allow us! I heard Mother say to Cousin Martha that if anybody else got off the time-honored comment, "Well, doesn't he pay for it all?" she was not going to make any further effort to get well. But

I don't hold it against Mother. Heavens, think how she feels toward the grocery-man!

All great changes are hard for some people, especially those who have planned their own lives carefully, deciding in advance what pain they will endure and what pain they will not; what responsibilities they will assume, and what ones they will not; and having it clearly understood with themselves what they will stand for, generally speaking. Persons of helpless age break into all well-established egotism hard—at least, I have! But I shall try to cultivate an impersonal point-of-view in the matter, and let all of my energies bend themselves in the direction of that black buckle at my Mother's throat. Truly I should enjoy unfastening that clasp—and, under the circumstances, it would seem the least one could do for his Mother.

At last there has come a time, when, with the sweetest will in the world, my Father and Cousin Martha have become a little automatic in their inquiries for my Mother's health. Mother is not used

to being ill, and she is even less accustomed to having anybody automatic with her. I am undecided which annoys her the more, continual pain, or watching the family take it as a matter of course. Anyway, Mother had a long talk with herself on the subject in the night, coming to the conclusion that something had to be done besides just standing things. She resolved to go to town to see her Special Physician.

She told me all about the visit when she came home—no, not exactly then, for she was dreadfully disturbed when she first arrived. She started to pick me up from my bed, then dropped me back, saying aloud, fiercely, "No—not now. I might crush him!" This was our first separation, you see, and the hours she was gone must have made her feel a little fondness for me, or something. I am sure I understood her mood. She would have not crushed me because she hated me, but rather because she had been so long gone. And probably she would not have crushed me at all.

She went out on the sand for an hour until she was

tamer, and then she came back and took me up. We sat and rocked and looked out to sea ever so long, although it is quite against the rules for anybody to rock me. I was surprised at this treat. I gathered from her firm hold on me that she needed me, and that to-morrow or next Christmas would not do. I was interested in her account of this trip to town, for I had been so amused seeing her grow stronger and stronger as she planned to go; and then as she considered what she should wear, and finally as she adjusted her most becoming veil, and for the first time in weeks, actually went out somewhere.

I should have pronounced her cured before she started, yet—she is not a poser. She is ill—I know she is. Well, Mother told me that by the time she reached the elevated station at the Battery, she was so weak she wasn't sure she had good sense, and she asked the guard at the station if the train standing there was going north, or south. He replied, indulgently, not meaning to be impertinent at all, "North, lady. If we was to go south, we'd be getting pretty

dog-gone wet—everything south o' here being ocean!" Mother told me it struck her as being humorous. I wish I had seen her smile.

On the way up town, Mother says she saw everybody working. The tenement windows were all open in the heat, and the sweat-shop people were working, working—not having a single moment to watch her go by, or even to be glad that it was possible for her to go to town alone! Mother had almost forgotten how wonderful it is to be able to work, she says. I fancy Mother likes best the work she cannot do—that is—the work she must do (whatever it be) does not appeal to her imagination. I suppose some persons consider it work to run a house and bring up children, but I think Mother would doubtless use another word for this occupation, and reserve the word "work" for something she thinks interesting. She told me once that she had always made isolated little efforts that never got anywhere, and that she longs for work that throbs with united purpose. But, believe me, if she counts me in with the other "little

isolated efforts" and already classes me a fizzle, I think I shall take the trouble to surprise her! Wouldn't you if you were I?

Mother eventually arrived at the Doctor's office, to continue her story. And there was her Special Physician looking as much of a college boy as ever, his amber eyes twinkling—which twinkle always did tease my Mother.

"Now, Mrs. Carr," he began, "will you please tell me how anybody looking as well as you do, has the nerve to come here and take up my time?" And he showed all of his nice, white teeth. I am crazy about his teeth. I have no teeth, myself. Sorry.

"I am ill, Doctor," Mother said, seriously. "I have a pain at the base of my brain, day and night—it wakes me, if I ever do get away from it in sleep. I see things that are not before me. I hate the grocery-man. I have no strength, physical or spiritual. I enjoy hurting people. I exist in a state of mad depression. I wish the baby was—"

He whirled about in his chair, and faced her, saying quickly, "The boy—dear little chap! I'm glad you mentioned him, for he is the solution of all trouble for you. The cure for you is to love the boy!"

"Love the boy?" Mother repeated. "I love nothing on earth! There is no love in me. And I think I have gone insane—at least, I should hesitate to have a nerve specialist examine me!"

The Doctor turned back to his desk, and tapped his inkwell with his pencil until Mother felt the suspense of their silence. Finally, with his brows knitted, and his voice stern, he remarked—offhand, rather, as though the matter were of merely casual interest—"Mrs. Carr, it has always impressed me as being a decided pity that any woman with a naturally good mentality, should deliberately allow herself to degenerate into a hypochondriac."

Mother was stunned. As soon as she could, she left, coming home like one in a dream—hurt to the soul—and her pride burning within her, burning like all the hells. To get this from the only person on

earth who understood how actual were the causes of her suffering—this from her Special Physician, was almost the end. Dear Mother! If only I had been able to speak the words of the up-grown, I might have soothed her a little. I might have told her that this was a hard thing for her Special Physician to do. It was a clever blow—though I would not have ventured this idea, perhaps. It showed wonderful insight into her character. Her case was not one for medicine alone, but one for patience and time. He knew best—and it was no easy task for him of the amber eye.

Daddy came home by the next train, and found us rocking together. He was much concerned over a new mosquito bite I had acquired in his absence, and his whole outward attention was concentrated upon me, as he sweetly, but impersonally, said to Mother, "How did you stand the trip to town, dear, and how are the nerves this evening?"

"Oh—very well, thank you," replied Mother in studied, commonplace tones.

"Good!" said Father, pleasantly, never questioning the truth of her statement, nor attempting to pursue the matter further. And the while I could feel the vicious pounding in my Mother's brain, and the pain in her reacted in me, it was so strong.

Then Cousin Martha dropped in, and leaning over me tenderly, she sort of purred, "You little darling! Cousin Martha wants her baby now—it's her turn, so it is!" Then, without glancing at Mother, she affectionately asked, "What did the Doctor say, dear?"

"Oh," replied Mother, with just the right degree of studied indifference in her intonation, "he said I was getting on very well indeed."

"Fine! I'm glad to hear it!" exclaimed Cousin Martha, never questioning the truth of the statement, nor attempting to pursue the matter further. And the while I could feel the wicked pounding in my Mother's brain, and the pain in her hurt me, it was so strong.

I did wish that Mother's Special Physician might

have seen the hopeful result of his master stroke. I call it splendid to cure a raging case of temporary insanity in one sentence! But if I might be granted a comment, I should say that if I were a Medicine Man with a twinkly amber eye and a manly way of making a merry-go-round of my hat on my forefinger, I should call it taking awful chances with gratitude to be quite so successful!

## CHAPTER IV

HOW time flies! Here we are back in town, and Blanche gone a way, and another dorky installed! The new domestic is an uncertain quantity in our household. I think Mother took her because we were desperate, and she is keeping her because she lacks the courage to discharge her. Although Miss Clara Cummins, as she calls herself, has a formidable eye, still I am sure she means well. Anyway, when Mother told her to polish up the bronze candlesticks, she worked two hours, and then appeared in the doorway of the sitting room looking quite wilted, saying, "I done the best I could, Mis' Carr, but I jes nat'ally can't get all this stuff off!" The "stuff" she referred to was the Tiffany finish. Oh, Mother was pleased!

I am glad Clara has entered our life, even if Mother is reduced to the point of fainting when she hears the Negress asking the hallboy if he has any letters for "Miss Clara Cummins, care of Carr." Clara is a starchy nigger—she dresses up in the discarded (or indefinitely borrowed) finery of the various actress ladies she has worked for, and she walks out after her day's work is done, just as one fancies the queen of some South Sea Island might deport herself. Then, although Mother does not know it, Clara Cummins came very near killing some new tenants in my behalf.

I was asleep in my carriage on the roof, when the new tenants shook out their rugs so that all the dirt blew in my face; and when Clara ran up to see how I was, she found me choking in the dust. Her remarks to the new tenants savored of Billingsgate done over into East Side New York with a Down South accent, and while Miss Cummins' comments pained my sensitive ears, I must say her talk was very much to the point—sufficiently so to provoke the new tenants

Y'know the best track this Queen had the world  
ever got all this spirit out





into saying they meant to see that she was put out of the building.

Clara and I agreed that in all probability the new tenants would drop the matter where they dropped their rugs; and we should hesitate to worry Mother with the row. Besides, Clara's conversation in Mother's hearing is exemplary. When one lives in a small apartment and has to put up with a home-going-at-night servant, one can't be too fussy—or one has no maid at all. Then, Miss Cummins lets me play homey with all the window shades in the apartment. I pull hard on the strings and cluck (we are very proud of my new accomplishment), and bye-and-bye the shade gets too frisky, and shoots up. I have heard Father saying he could not see why the curtains were out of order all the time. Miss Cummins and I say nothing. Miss Cummins won't, and I can't.

I have many toys, but people don't seem to understand persons of helpless age as well as they ought, considering that we have been a popular calling for

so long a time. They give one toys which are too big and heavy for little hands, and we shriek when we are offered these tiresome things. Miss Cummins knows many things in Life, among them things she ought not to know, and things in common with little children. Clara sees Mother safely out to the elevator door, then hurries back and gives me the tiny silver clock on Mother's desk. Mother has said several times lately that her clock is behaving queerly, and I'm not surprised. We drop it every day, sometimes quite hard. Miss Cummins won't tell, and I can't.

There are other little things about that one is not supposed to cut teeth on, but Clara lets me have them—until she hears the elevator slam at our floor. I don't mind the short spasms of temper that follow these away-takings, because she feeds me wee bites from the edges of lumps of sugar to stop the noise, which, of course, Mother and Mother's Special Physician would not allow if they knew. Miss Cummins does not mention things which would dis-

I am going to the great meeting at Hampton that  
shall these things - which





tub them, and I can't. I prefer little things of Mother's to big toys of mine.

Miss Cummins is extra black, and when she is all gotted-up, she wears a sort of small horse's tail pinned on the back of her head over the short kinks that grow there. To-day Miss Cummins and I washed this tail, and we tried to dry it over the biggest burner of the gas stove. But instead of slowly drying it, we inadvertently quickly sterilized it. Mother came in shortly after we got the blaze out, and in answer to her sniffing, Miss Cummins smartly volunteered the comment that if the janitor didn't quit burning the garbage in the steam heating plant, she was going to think very seriously of going back to Cincinnati!

We are fairly well crowded at our house, now that the wee rooms intended for a gentleman and his wife are obliged to accomodate besides the original list, a cousin, a baby and a maid. We use one room as a sitting room, library, drawing room, nursery and dining room. At one end of the place is an old

mahogany table with one leaf against the wall, and on it are some flowers and a pair of quaint candlesticks. When it is dinner time, Clara Cummins comes in in her black dress with her big white apron and her small white cap with the big black bow on it, and hits the table into the middle of the floor. Then she puts on it many things, most of which I should greatly like to get hold of. Sometimes when I am ready for bed I am allowed to watch her for a moment. She is not permitted to speak except when necessary in this room, the place already being full enough without being further crowded by remarks from her. But she makes funny eyes at me and takes bites out of my hand, in passing. They are not real bites.

Then they put me in my new bed, which I now have because my old white canvas bed fell down too often with me in it, and Miss Cummins said too much on the subject. She said so much, in fact, that it got to the point where Mother had to discharge her to preserve her self-respect, which she did—but it did not take. Clara came back just as though

nothing had been said about dismissal. So Mother bought an up-standing bed to stop her voice. I never got hurt in the old bed, but I might have. But I might fall out of the seventh story window, for that matter, as Miss Cummins and I frequently sit in the open, screenless window when Mother is at the market, although Clara has it understood with Mother that she simply cannot wash windows so high up—it makes her dizzy. The janitor washes our windows. Miss Cummins is not dizzy when I am with her, although Mother might be, if she saw us—which she never will, so long as Clara's hearing remains as good as it is. We can smell a latch-key before it gets within a foot of the keyhole.

Mother continues in her fresh air habits, just as she did in the country, and I heard Miss Cummins telling the janitor down the dumb-waiter shaft that if our flat was going to be kept so darn-cold on the floor all winter, she was going to do her feet up in hay. And she thinks it is rough on me, too, and she says when she is an old "lady" and I am a big man,

she is going to say, "Why, Mr. Carr, did you act'ally live through it?" I had a fine, long, large, comforting, juicy suck on a piece of raw bacon this afternoon. Nobody knew, but Miss Cummins and myself. Miss Cummins would not think of reporting it, and I can't. The things Mother feeds me are pasteurized; the things that Miss Cummins feeds me, are not. But I am pulling through, in spite of both of them.

Father says something has to be done to liven up this household. I think he is right. Cousin Martha is looking all worn out, and she never sleeps, while Mother is lashing most of her energy into trying to be true to her silent resolve not to acknowledge the pain in her brain. Why, she has even gone to such lengths as to call on our Special Physician and to give as her excuse the statement that she felt so well and happy she thought he would like to see her, as most of his visitors went to him in distress! I don't know what he of the amber eye really thinks, but I heard he once said he had given a good many years of his life trying to understand women, and that each

year he discovered he knew less of them than he thought he knew the year before! But I don't think women are hard to know, do you? My Mother is not hard to know.

However, I think my Mother is somewhat better, because our town grocery-man does not inspire so much hatred in her as our country one did.

Father went on to say that yesterday he ran onto an old friend of his—a grocer. (Mother jumped at the word). He had asked him to dinner, and he suggested to Mother that as his friend was very sensitive just now, it might be nice of her to write him a note.

Mother at once said in a puzzled way, "A grocer, dear?" And in her mind there hopped up the picture of a spotted, tired looking man in shirt sleeves (brushing away a streak of flour from his cheek and tucking his pencil behind his ear, all in one trip of his hand), while he asked, mechanically, "Anything else? Got coffee enough for over Sunday?"

"A grocer," repeated Father. "Rather an in-

interesting man. He asked you and me to go to the theatre with him sometime, and I thought if he first met Martha here with us, he might ask her, too. We must do something to get the poor girl out of herself."

"But Martha never knew any grocers, except on business," Mother went on.

"Time she did!" said Father.

"Well, tell me something about him—a gentleman, I suppose?"

"I suppose," said Father, smiling. "At least he has always ranked as such in college and in society. To-day I met him again, and he told me that for months he has not been able to face happiness, but that he would try to come to our house if you wanted him. I am sure you do want him."

Mother wrote the note, and she and Cousin Martha braced themselves against the possibility of a shock, and we all awaited the meeting with Father's grocer friend who could not face happiness. Cousin Martha remarked she hoped the list of dinner guests would not get out to Park Hill, where, until she came

to us in sorrow, Cousin Martha was "one of the leaders of our select social circles," to quote the Sunday paper. And Mother said she was glad that Cousin Martha had spoken because that reminded her that it would never do to have canned soup for dinner, because the professional taste would detect it in a minute!

A day, and then came a special messenger with a huge box of flowers and a note from the grocer. "Any nutmegs get in by mistake?" sweetly inquired Cousin Martha. But Mother was too busy observing the coat-of-arms at the head of the paper, and the beauty of the flowers, to notice such sauciness. The grocer had expressed himself as being delighted to dine with them on the morrow.

"Does your friend speak English, or talk shop?" asked Cousin Martha of Father.

"That will do for you" retorted Father.

"But a grocer, Richard!" (Mother jumped at the word).

"You two women make me tired!" was all they could get out of Father.

Miss Clara Cummins made a good dinner, and brightened up the silver with an extra flourish in honor of the first guest since our return to civilization. The sitting-room—library—nursery—drawing-room—dining-room never looked prettier and less crowded than it did that evening at seven to the dot, when the elevator door slammed at our floor. Mother and Cousin Martha had got themselves up rather more than usual—Mother in a white evening gown, and Cousin Martha in her very softest, blackest dress, with a white ruche at her throat and a pearl brooch. They exchanged teasing glances, so that Father might know the mental picture of their guest was amusing them. But they quickly came to order, as Clara opened the door to the gentleman and took his great fur coat, his topper, his gloves and his stick. In another instant he was approaching the sitting-room door. I got all this from Mother's mind later on you see.

He walked the dinner guest, faultless in his dress as a fashion plate—slender, serious, polite—fascinat-

ing. And there was no noticeable aroma of dill pickles about him.

Mother walked to meet the gentleman, and shook hands cordially, saying, "Mr. Ludlow, I want you to know my cousin, Mrs. Burnham!"

Mr. Ludlow held Cousin Martha's hand a fraction of an instant longer than was necessary, bowing over it, deferentially, and saying nothing. I fancy this delicately done bit of flattery was the first light thing that had hovered near dear Cousin Martha in a very long time. The time, really, was but short, although Cousin Martha regarded it as a great many years, and she felt very middle-aged indeed, although she and Mother are pretty much the same time old, which isn't so very old when my Mother smiles. I used to wonder in the summer which of them was the older—Mother with the pain in her brain, or Cousin Martha with the empty place in her heart.

Well, from this little thing and that little thing I heard and felt, I got the picture of this dinner well

printed in my imagination. I know, too, that it went on record under the heading of "Mother's consolation party." They were only just seated when—so Clara Cummins' mind told my mind, later—when the man who could not face happiness began making dreadfully depressing remarks about Death and what the human soul had to live through in its loneliness. It was a strange thing for him to do, considering Cousin Martha's black dress. Mourning is supposed to be a protection, but it is usually a provocation. So on he plunged with mystery and isolation and other cheerful topics, until Mother grew nervous lest they should have a scene with Cousin Martha, who was very raw as to nerves just now, and emotional always. Mother saw her struggling under the persistent pounding of sad comment and doleful theories, and she glanced appealingly at Father, who undertook to change the tide of the talk, while he carved.

But a jolly lot of good it did! One might as well have tried to change the current of the Gulf Stream. Father's humorous story never even disturbed Mr.

Ludlow's admiring glances at Cousin Martha—all it did was to stop his remarks for the moment. Father waited with his carving knife in the air, for the others to add some anecdote along the same lines, and maybe he would have been waiting yet, except that just here Mother told something funny, which nobody followed sufficiently well to smile at in the right spot. Cousin Martha did not hear it at all, because her whole being was concentrated on not allowing herself to get out of control and have hysterics. Father glanced at Mother with an *O Lord!* sort of expression, and signalled for help. Mother tried again to break into the painful magnetism generated by the failure of everybody present to have a good time, and ventured, apropos of her desperation, "Mrs. Burnham is from Park Hill. She likes New York, however!" And the plucky little effort had all of the spontaneity of a doll's "Mama!" when you poke it in the right place.

Doubtless this was a sort of tin-foil weapon with which to slay the gloom that had settled over the table,

for Mr. Ludlow apparently did not hear her; he kindly paused until her voice had ceased, and then went on, "But there must be something after this life—there must be something to make it worth while to have gone through the horror of the most commonplace human experiences! Birth—life—death—what are they all for?"

This came near being too much for Clara Cummins, who dashed out of the room at the first opportunity. The funny side of it, unfortunately struck both Father and Mother at the same time, and Mother nervously giggled, as Cousin Martha fumbled for her handkerchief. "We must not think of such things, Mr. Ludlow!" she exclaimed, decisively, and she smiled, though it seemed a very foolish time to smile. Father bit his lip, as he realized how flat it was of Mother to smile.

"What Mrs. Carr says is quite true!" echoed Father, inanely, although Father is seldom inane. "We must be happy, as my wife suggests! Will you have light meat, Ludlow, or dark?"

"When I first realized that I had to face life squarely—face it with no possible future—"

"Did you say second joint, Ludlow?" Father cut in, as Mother's prayerful signal reached him, and Cousin Martha acted as though she had forgotten the exact location of the fire-escape.

"Anything at all, old man," replied the guest who had been asked in to take Cousin Martha out of her wretched self for a moment. "What I eat does not interest me any more. And as I was going to say about the tragedy of loneliness, when I first—"

"Ah! Mr. Ludlow, excuse me, do, for interrupting, and changing the subject abruptly, but I—I—"

"Don't apologize, dear Mrs. Carr! Nothing really ever interrupts my train of thought. I don't think anything could, when one has been through the experiences I have."

Things looked dark indeed. Mother felt temper, almost, for it seemed abnormally selfish of this stranger to go on persistently in this minor key, when there was present someone who had lived through bitter

trials, herself, and who was trying to take a broad view of it all—an impersonal view, if such a thing is possible. But try as she might, there was no changing the tone of things. Mother's attempt to cheer Cousin Martha was such a farce that it took the greatest self-control not to be overcome by "the shallows."

But eventually the dinner ended, and Miss Cummins converted the dining-room into a drawing-room by setting the table back against the wall, while the party gathered together in one corner—the library. Here Mr. Ludlow took a new tack, and began making remarks which showed him to be interested in Cousin Martha's character. He boldly asserted his belief that from the way she used her hands, the toilet articles on her dressing table were all arranged in formal sequence. Cousin Martha did all she could not to look as pleased as she was. As a rule Cousin Martha's dressing table looks like the memory of a whirlwind, but for once it was most orderly, and Mr. Ludlow was permitted to stick his head in the door to see what a remarkable reader of character he was!

Mother and Cousin Martha were uncomfortably amused, but they kept their faces straight, of course.

But it must have been a strenuous evening, for when at last Mr. Ludlow was helped into his great fur coat by Father, and Clara Cummins importantly handed him his stick and gloves and topper, and everybody said goodnight the second time, and he was actually gone, the whole family fell in a heap—two on the couch and one in a chair. Father was the first to be able to speak—he whistled a long, soft whistle. Then Cousin Martha found breath to remark that they might overlook Father's grocer friends—(Mother jumped at the word)—upsetting all tradition by appearing like Russian princes, but she did wish they weren't so dismal! Mother hadn't any words—she just smiled at the situation, and said they must be sure to give some more little dinners and liven themselves up!

When she and Father came into my room, I heard Father say, "Well, what do you think of my friend Ludlow?"

"I think he is going to marry my cousin," replied Mother, quick as a flash.

"My dear!" reproved Father. "I think your idea shows very bad taste under the circumstances!"

"I am not trying to be funny," Mother said in her own defense. "I mean what I say. I believe he made up his mind the moment he looked at her."

Father was evidently displeased. "This shows how much you women know!" he protested. "Here is a man crushed—absolutely unable to think of a woman; and here is a woman in the saddest frame of mind—and you try to say that—oh! a lot you women know!"

"On the whole I think you will find that women know just as much along some lines as men ever know," dryly remarked Mother, upon which Father complained again of her taste.

"When it comes to marriage," Mother went on courageously, "I think the whole matter is an affair of fate, rather than of taste."

As there was no more said on the subject that



Father was evidently displeased. "This shows  
how much you women know." page 68



night, I inferred this subtle shot concerning the possible reason for Mother's having married Father, was enough to silence him for a while: although I saw a smile around the edge of his mouth when he leaned over to kiss me good-night. And when he reached up to put out the light, I was sure it was a large smile.

## CHAPTER V

A LOVELY lady comes to see us often. Behind her is a faithful maid who says, "Yes, Mrs. Carr?" to our visitor, just like a nice, neat little machine. The lovely lady is my Father's Mother, who is the understandingest admirer I have. She brings me little things to play with and soft shoes, which she kindly suggested I would soon be untying, myself. I have had a most entertaining time since this idea was put into my head, sitting on the bed and struggling with the bows. I get the shoes off frequently. This game is not particularly amusing to the up-grown who keeps putting them on again.

My delightful Grandmother makes a wonderful springboard, for she is large and comfortable. As she holds me, I jump and jump and jump almost out of her arms. She is more satisfactory in this capacity than her maid would be, for Jane is thin

Richard King's Mother . . .



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and distinctly unbouncing. My Grandmother wears two sets of eye-glasses on one hook in the lace of her gown. Very thoughtful of her. I have charming times with the tiny gold chains, which survive some pretty big yanks. "De bootifuls" my adorable Grandmother calls me. This is about all the baby-talk I ever hear. It is warming. I like it.

My Mother says such things to me as, "Dicklet, I wish this fretting stopped, instantly!" It stops. She says she appreciates that her actual words mean nothing to me, but she is sure I understand her tone. I do. "De Bootifuls," therefore, is refreshing. You would realize this, if you were I.

Poor Mother! She still fancies herself unreconciled to the changes I have brought into her life. It disturbs her not to be able to work twenty-four hours a day, for work is her favorite diversion—although it wasn't, when she had the time. I don't believe she ever worked very much, myself. I am her excuse for not working now. As a girl she chose her own excuse. This is probably the difference,

but she does not see, and I cannot speak. If I knew her language I might point out this fact to her, gently. I am sometimes sorry I cannot speak. Yet, some pleasure is to be got out of misery, it would seem. What is my Mother going to do by way of fun, I wonder, when she becomes so well that her sense-of-humor will no longer let us call on our Special Physician?

We enjoy talking with our Physician over the telephone very much, thank you. We have to consult him every few days about my food, or something. He gave us a little book called "The Care of Children" with the idea, no doubt, of having his wire free once in a while, so that some of his other patients might have a chance to bother him. But the book is better for our purposes than his, because the repeated advice of this little volume is, "If, however, these symptoms seem serious, lose no time in consulting a good physician." We never lose any time. Certainly not. And wasn't it sweet of the Special Physician to give us this book, himself?

But as yet we have refrained from giving our Doc-

for any "grateful patient" presents. I hardly think that Mother will ever make him any carpet slippers or give him an umbrella, for once he said in our hearing that he never minded losing umbrellas—he always got six or eight every Christmas. I feel confident that Mother will never do anything any more uninteresting than to send him a print (special delivery), of every photograph I have made, which may hold his attention a moment, of course, if she carefully labels each one with my name, so he may know which one of his little boys I am.

I have about decided that when I grow up, I shall choose a vocation with a view to having my benefactors realize that my interest in them is professional, not personal. It must be tiresome to be a successful physician. Large quantities of gratitude heaped upon one for doing no more than his duty, must be a sort of continuous anti-climax. Yet, if I ever do become a physician, I suppose I can show the business sense to run an umbrella shop in connection with my medical work?

Like so many sensitive persons, Mother inflicts almost as many wounds as she receives. To-day she spoke sharply to Cousin Martha for accepting an invitation to go automobiling with our recent guest, Mr. Ludlow—whose violets arrived before Cousin Martha was awake this morning; whose telephone call interrupted her breakfast; whose books got here by eleven and whose machine has been sighted hurrying past our front entrance, on the chance of seeing somebody go out, several times within the last hour. Mother seems to think that Cousin Martha ought not to encourage admiring gentlemen just yet. Cousin Martha seems to think that the little which is endurable in her life, ought to be accepted thankfully. There you are—gratitude again! She is unconsciously grateful to a man who wants her off motoring, all to himself, where nobody can interfere with the flow of his sufferings by any irrelevant remarks about cheerfulness or light or dark meat—off where he can make her weep for him—off where she will naturally not have the nerve to mention her own

troubles. Indeed, it must be thrilling to be an up-grown man and have all the ladies grateful to you for the wrong things! I have hopes of trying it, some day, myself.

Well, off Cousin Martha would go, and as a result Mother's nerves began to nag her until, in desperation, she went out for a lonely walk. Miss Cummins and I were left together, and we put in the time agreeably calling at the various apartments, where I got bites of everything I should not have had, but pie. I howled for pie at one lady's house, but I made a miscalculation and stopped howling too soon, getting only some of the browned snow on the top of it, when it was the hardwood floor in the bot-tom that I really wanted. We did not get the silver cleaned, but we squared ourselves with Mother, fortunately, by Miss Cummins reporting that I had had a dreadful pain all the time she was away, a pain so bad that it necessitated her walking the floor with me the entire afternoon.

Just after Mother came in, Cousin Martha returned,

all the black clouds on her hat being blown off to one side, her cheeks pinker than usual, her eyes a bit heavy from tears, or the effort to restrain them, and, in a word, looking between five and six hundred years younger than I had ever seen her.

"We've had such a wonderful spin-away up into Westchester County!" she said, lightly. Mother was silent, so Cousin Martha rippled on, "Where were you this afternoon, dear?" ignoring Mother's disapproving manner.

"Why—why, I was—I was out!" Mother enlightened her. Cousin Martha's mind was not on the subject when she asked the question, so she did not notice that she did not find out what she wanted to know. Miss Cummins was not altogether satisfied, however. She hated not to know things. She had the kitchen door open a crack now.

But the little tilt was too much for Mother. In bed to-night she has tossed and tossed about, saying to herself, "If only I had the strength to work, other people's affairs would seem less important to me, I

There had been a wonderful fire about up into  
Western County.





suppose. Oh! what a tragedy it is to have one's work taken away! I have longed for a piano and another chance at amounting to something, but Life pushes this ambition farther and farther from me with every day! I have to be somebody's mother, and it takes all the time, all the health and all the money there is. And I am left with nothing to sing about—my own life ended before I was ready to give it up!"

This is what I have to deal with every time my Mother is too tired. It is a sad thing for one of helpless age. I did not mean to make anybody unhappy! I could not stand this, if Mother directed her ravings at me directly, but she does not, quite—they seem to be aimed at the scheme of things, generally speaking, but they get off the track, sometimes, and hit me, and I am still little. I wish it were not so.

Evidently, when Mother married, she must have told herself that marriage was a good incident to a career. Mother should not talk to herself so much, it is not good for her, really. I just wish I could speak

her language! I would try to make her see that the whole responsibility of me does not lie entirely with her. I am an individual, if I am small, and I am responsible for myself, and willing to stand by it!

But Mother will not have it so. The weight of that black cloak made of all the things she hates, is killing her, and the iron clasp has a way of tightening itself at her throat.

I knew no other method of breaking into Mother's mood, than to sneeze, which I did. She forgot herself instantly, and leaped to a sitting posture so that she could lean over my new bed to see that I was covered—which I took particular pains not to be. I was cold, so she lifted me and hugged me tight to her, which gave me the opportunity to run my hand over her throat.

There was no iron buckle there at all! Her throat was a little hard where the sob was hiding, but there wasn't anything else there, I tell you. Is it not very extraordinary?

## CHAPTER VI

I DISLIKE talking so much about myself, but my taste in this particular is being contaminated by hearing myself incessantly discussed by those about me. "Hasn't he wonderful eyes?" each lady says, as though she had made an original discovery. By the way—have I mentioned that my eyes are no longer blue? No, they are a sort of hazel. Changing the color of one's eyes is not as bad form in babies and cats, as changing the color of one's hair is in lady up-gowns.

I have now reached the age when my Mother thinks I am sufficiently irresistible to have my photograph taken with her. Cousin Martha ran the risk of being late to look over some books with a friend of hers at Brentano's—I wonder who?—and she and Mother took me to the photographer's. I was sorry to disappoint them, but I was suffering from a

bad humor, and could not have smiled, if I had been willing to—which I wasn't. The snap-shot gentleman impressed me as being a harmless kind of a lunatic, who got off a lot of tootsey-wootsey talk and hung onto a tiny bulb on the end of a small hose, to keep from jiggling himself off his balance. He frantically waved a squeaking duck, which was too large for one of helpless age to care to examine. I did not encourage his gyrations by even so much as appearing to be alive. I stared at the foolish person blankly. The situation was trying for Mother, who could not control her facial muscles well enough to have a likeness made of anything but teeth, while Cousin Martha suddenly flew out of the room. Possibly she had a pain somewhere. I cannot say.

All the while the active snap-shotist was speaking to the atmosphere, like a monkey chattering on a cold day to keep himself from freezing to death. And the way he over-exercised the duck, was a matter that ought to have been investigated by the Society for the Prevention of Roughness to Toys.

"Laugh, little boy, laugh!" he cried out now and then between hops. I assure you there was nothing whatever to laugh at. My one thought was that the man was in agony, for no Ute Indian on the war-path ever indulged in such goings-on. Had I looked human, he might have made a dash for my scalp, and I haven't enough hair to be getting careless with, and I would not have given it to such a person, if I had. Eventually they all became un-excited again, and the man mopped his brow and said he feared he had got a sad picture, and he was usually so successful, too, as a rule. Very glad to hear it, I am sure.

It was good indeed to get back to private life and Miss Clara Cummins, who took me eagerly from Mother the moment we appeared, as though Mother had kept me longer than she had any intention of allowing me to be out. And I took Clara's hand and put it on the sugar can, meaning, of course, that I wanted some sugar. I always put the nearest up-grown hand on whatever object I want—it saves a

lot of trouble, as I speak Actions better than English which, to be accurate, I do not speak at all.

"I suppose the brown paint on the can attracts him, Clara," Mother suggested. But Miss Cummins did not feel a call to enlighten Mother, and I couldn't.

Cousin Martha and her friend must have looked over a great many books, for Cousin Martha did not come home until dinner time, and then surprised Mother by saying she was dining out.

"Martha!" Mother said, appealingly, "Martha, do go a little slower! What do we know of this man, anyway, except that he is a grocer and doesn't look it?"

"It is no discredit to be a grocer, especially in this country! Besides, he is quite the biggest grocer and the best grocer in New York!" snapped Cousin Martha.

"Oh!" gasped Mother, doubtless noticing a slight change in Cousin Martha's point-of-view. "But," she argued further, "think of yourself, if you won't think of the groceries! Would this not shock them all in Park Hill—just now—you understand?"

"What is Park Hill?" demanded Cousin Martha, grandly. "What is it anyway, but an overgrown village full of narrow-minded, empty-headed, country bumpkins, I should like to know? Why Courtney says—I mean, Mr. Ludlow says—you have no idea of the true value of these provincials until you meet them in New York!"

"Was he speaking of you?" softly ventured Mother.

"Certainly not!" she stormed. "He thinks me very different from the average!"

"Provincials," Mother harked back. "Hum! You seem to forget that these are our people he is speaking of—people he has never met, except, possibly on business, and who—"

"I doubt if he cares to meet them in any other way than on business!" Cousin Martha retorted.

Something was wrong, somewhere. Mother began to think. Was this new tone in Cousin Martha due to three telephone calls a day, too many flowers, too much candy—or what? Mother was particularly struck by the significance of Cousin Martha's

accidentally making use of our acquaintance's Christian name. She hardly felt she could shut her cousin up in her room and feed her bread and milk until she came to her senses, although she would have been glad to do so. It seemed best to drop this subject and take up that of a letter asking Cousin Martha to go out to a Long Island place for a few days.

"You'd best go, Martha," Mother urged. "You need the change, and we can't do much to amuse you here in these cramped quarters. Do telephone that you will be there on the four-thirty train to-morrow!"

Cousin Martha expressed herself as being unattracted by the country in winter; besides, being in mourning she could not go anywhere. It would be just a stupid time sitting around the house, at best. But Mother kept at Cousin Martha until she saw her safely off on the Long Island train the next afternoon, and had got her promise not to encourage Mr. Ludlow's going down there among friends who might make

criticisms. Cousin Martha agreed with Mother that this would be a social mistake. And the train started up with Cousin Martha blowing Mother a nice little kiss through the car window, Mother nodding back, sweetly—and Mr. Courtney Evanston Ludlow in the smoking car—though we did not know about it at the time.

Mother was worried. She wondered what the family would say, for Cousin Martha had always walked so carefully within the rigid little lines that Society draws for ladies. But things would right themselves. Cousin Martha was out of town, and would, no doubt, come to herself. Also, the telephone at our house would now have a chance to cool off, and not get a hot-box. Our apartment was so full of flowers that one would suppose, at a glance, everybody was dead and the papers had announced that it was requested by the relatives that no floral tributes be sent. Also, we knew that if Miss Clara Cummins ate any more of Mr. Courtney Evanston Ludlow's chocolates, she would be sick, and we

should then have to turn to and do the work ourselves.

But we had grown used to Mr. Ludlow's nice voice at the telephone, and so, when three days after Cousin Martha left, we heard him calling us, we were pleased. He wanted to know if Father, Mother and I would not like to go out automobiling on Sunday. This was very thoughtful of him, and Mother expressed herself as delighted to accept for us all.

Sunday came, bright and beautiful as one could wish, and we were got up warmly, special care being taken to do me up well and then deposit me in a large flannel bag. Mother wore a gorgeous coat of fur, belonging to Mr. Ludlow, as did Father, too. Mr. Ludlow never did things by halves—if, as his guest you needed fur coats, he saw that they were at your disposal. Rather more thoughtful than most grocers, who are generally late with the goods, especially if you need the eggs right away.

"Where shall we go?" asked Mr. Ludlow, turning

Willelmus de Gualtero





round to us, as the chauffeur cranked up the great machine.

"Why, I don't know, I'm sure," answered Mother.

"Anywhere you like. You are more familiar with the good roads than we are."

"To the ferries, Banks!" he ordered.

We got almost as much interest as we hoped for from the janitor and all passers-by, and soon were out of town, where many leafless trees and barking dogs and farm houses were skipping past us. All of a sudden—(Mr. Ludlow does things more or less suddenly, always,)—our host turned again and politely said, "When do you expect your cousin home, Mrs. Carr?"

"In a few days, I think, Mr. Ludlow, although I want her to stay as long as she will, as she needs the rest."

"Wouldn't you like to drop in and see how she is?"

Mr. Ludlow suggested this with the air of one wishing to confer a favor upon his guests. "We shall be going very near her place, and it won't take us far out of our way."

I wish I had been older—I might have nudged Mother, or something, for she is a peculiar person when you take her unawares; she seems to lose all power to say no. If Father had asked her to marry him, over the telephone, it would have saved a lot of trouble. But I was helpless. And the next instant my Mother was saying, "Why, why, I had not thought of it, but I suppose we might stop a moment."

"The road to the left, Banks, when you reach the big stone house," ordered Mr. Ludlow. He seemed perfectly familiar with the neighborhood, we all decided at once, though no one said so in words.

Mother could have scolded herself soundly the instant after this, for here she was, responsible for their going to look up Cousin Martha, when she had felt and spoken so strongly against it! It was a joke on her. And what could she do, after once having given her sanction to it? Well, she argued, it would make no difference, probably, anyway—she was, no doubt, a little too strict in her ideas of conventionality. Mr. Ludlow would be presented as Father's

friend, and everyone would naturally suppose that she and Father, not Mr. Ludlow, had chosen to call. Then Mother told herself firmly that she was oversensitive and self-conscious, and the world would get on a shade better if she would cultivate the habit of taking less interest in other people's affairs!

Imagine our surprise, when we were presented to a room full of pleasant persons, to see Cousin Martha with her hat and black clouds all on, her coat on a nearby chair, and her suitcase right out in the hall, in the direct line of our vision!

"Hello, Martha," Mother said, affectionately, "have you just come in, or are you just going out?"

There was a good deal of fussing over me, but I noticed that Cousin Martha stammered something indefinite, and her hostess turned, just here, and exclaimed, "What do you think of her, Mrs. Carr? She said only a few moments before you arrived, that she simply could not live another day without that baby of yours, and to our consternation, she

appeared down stairs with her luggage and announced she was taking the five o'clock train for home!"

Although there were three women kissing me at once, I still was able to catch a glimpse of Mother through a crack between them, and her expression would have amused you! She was not convinced, to say the least. She looked at Mr. Ludlow evidently trying to discern whether or not he and Cousin Martha were guilty of a conspiracy; but Mr. Ludlow sat idly blowing cigarette smoke through his nose, and ingeniously creating the impression of one who was doing some self-sacrificing thing and trying to be nice about it. He certainly would have been a most attractive model for a painting entitled "Not Guilty." Suddenly—(when Mr. Ludlow is not sudden, he is dreaming)—recalling himself to the conversation, which, as yet, he had taken no part in, he looked up with another idea. "If Mrs. Burnham is really in earnest, it will give us pleasure to take her back with us in the car," he said, addressing Mrs. Burnham, the roomful, Life in general, Mother

—or anybody who cared to take the suggestion into consideration. Everybody listened—of course.

"I-a—wouldn't it-a—be crowding you?" shyly asked Cousin Martha. This was pretty well done for a dress rehearsal, too.

"Not at all!" promptly replied Mr. Ludlow, more to Mother than to Life in general, this time, and with the subtle insinuation of doing what he did only to oblige her.

But Mother is game, for a woman—(being a man-being, I feel I have to modify the word "game" when applied to a woman)—and to herself, she acknowledged that she had been cleverly trapped into doing the last thing on earth she wanted to do; but to the others she did not intimate that she was anything but pleased by the outcome of the day. And so, off we started with the house-party waving bye-byes the way they try to teach me to wave (but I won't); Cousin Martha, Mr. Ludlow, Father and I in the tonneau, and Mother in front with Banks, whom she found most entertaining.

Banks is nervous and thin, and like all true automobilists, a fatalist. In turning the first corner he came within a breath of catching a man, and he promptly commented, "There's a time for all fools, but I guess his is still coming to him. I thought for a second we'd got him." In Mr. Ludlow's employ, Banks has been reduced to cynicism and one tooth. The doctor suggested once that it would be best for Mr. Ludlow to transfer Banks to one of the wagons, and get a new chauffeur, by way of letting the man down from the awful nervous tension at which he lived. But Mr. Ludlow, not being in very good health himself, never undertook to propose the indignity to Banks. *One of the wagons*—ha! I can just see the sneer that would uncover that one tooth! But had he condescended to the place, I feel confident the butter would have been delivered promptly enough to suit even Miss Clara Cummins.

It had been Bank's duty for months to drive the great French car fast enough to keep Mr. Ludlow ahead of his own unhappiness. He confided to

Mother under his breath that he did not mind the strain, except when Mr. Ludlow undertook to drive the car himself, first remarking that it made no difference what happened to him—not to worry about him. Banks wasn't worrying about him, probably, so much as about the car and himself, and he was not especially contented in the tonneau, hanging onto whatever he could find loose, trying to see through the dust, and praying for the best. He told Mother that Mr. Ludlow brooked no interference on anybody's part in anything he decided to do—(this characteristic was not as surprising to Mother as it might have been)—but that once he was forced to speak to his master, severely. "My God! sir! Don't take a double curve like that, sir!" he exclaimed, and meant it. I know what kind of curve he had in mind—it went east, and immediately upon it followed another turn going west, and it must have been a terror or Banks would not have spoken, for he never minded blurring the scenery himself. And he remarked that the dogs and chickens they got

on one of these occasions, was a warning, and no mistake!

Soon we were in town, having made the home-stretch with dash and style, scattering the natives without argument. They put me to bed and then they had something to eat themselves, and I could hear them talking in the next room.

"How did you happen to think of looking me up? Thoughtful dears!" Cousin Martha gayly asked, with what Mother thought unnecessary pride, considering that she was the winner already.

But having resolved to flatter the culprits into thinking they had done a rarely brilliant thing, Mother spoke up, brightly, "Oh, this was an inspiration of Mr. Ludlow's. Wasn't it nice of him?"

Later on, when they got the cigarette smoke aired out of the apartment, and the gasoline smoke had blown off our block, and Cousin Martha had gone to her room, but poorly disguising her amusement, Father and Mother exchanged a few remarks in our room.

"Richard," began Mother, "something ought to be done about this flirtation! Some day soon, Martha will be coming in here and telling us she has been married to that man."

"My dear," Father replied, coldly, "I have known you for years, and this is the first instance in which I have observed you to be ridiculous. I think your comments are shocking, and I wish you would not—"

"There you go!" Mother cut him off. "You haphazard on taste, when we are facing marriage! I insist that something ought to be done to make Martha realize that her affairs are progressing too rapidly!"

"Oh, my dear girl, it is a wonder you would not bother about the realities of Life, not the possibilities! Heavens and earth! Let the poor, tired little thing alone! Lord, but that man stays late!"

"That man troubles me," volunteered Mother.

## CHAPTER VII

LIFE has taken on a serious aspect for me. I am engaged in an occupation that is taking up a lot of time. You see, my Mother wears some pearl pins that are fascinating to me, and I expend all my energy when in her lap, trying to loosen the tiny pearls from their moorings. I struggle and struggle with my delicate and easily bent nails to get up just an edge of one wee pearl. It is a difficult task, and quite as diverting to Mother as to me. When we had guests the other night, they took me out of bed and carried me into the sitting room to show me off, everybody being requested to speak softly. Mother's Special Physician held me strongly and almost tenderly and offered me his cigarettes to muss up, which I took mild pleasure in doing, although sleepy at the time. Mother told everyone about the pearl pickings we have—(will they never realize that I understand them?)—so I promptly began the same

thing on the Doctor's studs. It was a pretty party, and I wish they had let me stay longer.

Mother is very vain about me, and takes me to call on people, doing me up in a white woolly monk's coat with a pointed cap attached to it, and a cord around the waist. Under her other arm, she carries my great white Teddy Bear, and I am undecided whether or not we are quite innocent of the small sensation we create every time we venture out. I am growing old. I am able to kiss, and say in English unmistakable, "Mumma" and "Dadda;" I can pull the cover off the dressing case seven times out of every ten times I am carried near it; and I crawl under my bed-clothes, in the hope of frightening my parents into thinking I must have been kidnapped. I have not heard them mention being alarmed, however. And this morning I woke up early and leaned over and kissed my Mother's cheek, which surprised her. But she did not mind the surprise, I think.

Mother is all nerves lately, and I often catch her mind saying it is rude of itself, to degenerate into a

hypochondriac. So when a friend came in and asked Mother to do something she did not want to do—go down to the Yiddish theatre on the Bowery to see some Russian players—Mother smiled, and said she would be delighted. Cousin Martha had an engagement to go out in a big French car to where some fine scenery grew which one might see some other time, when not in an automobile. And Father and I were left alone for the first time in our lives.

I cried hard, in spots, which worried him. But he fed me as directed and bounced me, and felt himself deciding he would rather be responsible for the financial end of a married life, than the domestic. But we were nearer to each other than we had been before.

When Mother returned smelling distinctly rag-pickerish, and full of enthusiasm for the leading lady and the “types” they had seen, Father threw up his hands and called out vigorously, “Take this job away from me quick, and why didn’t you leave those pearl pins for him to work on? I should go mad if

The day after Walter took the train he  
going to the Big Side Theatre . . .





I had this responsibility alone another minute! Why in thunder does that nigger have to go out every Sunday, anyway?"

The day after Mother broke the Sabbath by going to an East Side theatre, it was Monday all day. Miss Cummins had evidently neglected to get out of the right side of her bed. She was horrid, and showed her disregard for her fellow men by hanging a lot of newly dyed black dress material out on our pulley rope, directly over a nice clean washing that was fanning in the air, three flights down.

The down stairs maid stuck her head out of the window, and told us (none too politely), that she wanted those dripping black rags taken in so that they would not spoil her clothes. Miss Cummins stuck her kinky head out of our window and told the down stairs "colored-lady" (none too politely) where she might go, if she didn't like the rags. The place she mentioned was one I had never heard of before. It sounded alarming to me. Mother being out, the two ladies had quite a dispute, and I

learned the police would have to be called in, because the downstairs kinks said they were going to the roof of the building where our aft pulley was fastened, to cut our rope and show us where our black rags would do their dripping!

Miss Cummins made a few elegant remarks upon what she would do to her, if she cut the rope. And on the whole it was thrilling, and in the confusion, I ate all I wanted of a new pound of butter that lay on the table nearby, incidentally smashing the plate it was on, in getting it to my highchair tray. I was so glad Mother was out!

This Monday started badly all around, and I could not help but feel that the very air was charged with trouble.

Somebody had died who belonged to Father's office, and he came home early, to find that Mother was dreadfully disturbed by a scene she had had with Cousin Martha, and so was not as glad to see him as he naturally supposed she would be. They were both depressed, and said I would have to sit

in the open window with my things on to get the air, as they would not push a baby cart in the streets, if they died for it. As it was wash-day, Miss Cummins was too busy. So I sat there in my highchair, none too happy, watching the dray horses in the street back of us, and throwing as many toys out of the window as I could, and dumping the rest on the floor, just as fast as ever they picked them up for me. In places, I yelled—and was glad of it.

Miss Cummins looked dangerous, positively. And Father tried to read the paper, saying, "For the Lord's sake, dear! Pretty soon we shall have to nail the furniture down for the wind that blows in here! Where is my heavy overcoat?" And he put it on, rammed his hat down hard, and smoked a pipe with energy.

Mother was shaking and on the verge of tears. "The child has to have air, I suppose," she plaintively remarked, as though there were no peace on earth, now that I had come to board with them permanently. There are times when I do feel sorry

for all the bother I have caused. Possibly they would have been out walking, except for me—though, nowadays, Mother has little strength for unnecessary things like that. Oh, they were depressed! I might have taken this occasion to have been sweet and cooey and all that, but one of helpless age always reflects the general attitude about him, when he can't work up a complaint of his own, so I fretted and whined, and settled into a discontented heap in my great monk's coat. Soon Mother began walking the floor.

"Say!" said Father, irritably, "can't you sit down, or is the breeze too strong to admit of it? You drive me crazy, tramping about. Sit down, dear, and enjoy the air! Why, it's a Kansas cyclone, and a bird—what more do you want?"

"Richard," Mother began, "I have had a dreadful time with Martha to-day, and I wish you would not add to my distress by trying to be as funny as you can."

Gracious! I was afraid this would start something

serious, so I made believe I intended to jump out of my chair, through the open window. This changed the tone of things for an instant, as they dragged my chair into the room, and made a few comments on New York as a home for poor people and children.

"What has Martha done now?" demanded Father.

"Taken a harmless walk around the corner with a worn-out man who talks Shakespeare and religion to her?"

"Shakespeare and religion—*nothing!*" stormed Mother.

"Now see here, little woman!" Father said, with a firm touch, "you are giving yourself a lot of concern over nothing. In the first place, Martha's whole bringing up has been conventional, and she knows just as much about good taste and bed, as you do—she ought to know more, as she is older. As for her caring for Lydlow—it's all nonsense. She has a notion she can take the morbid point-of-view out of him, and she is having a little fun. As for Lydlow, you don't suppose a man of his experience is going

to lose his head in two weeks, do you? Rot! Let them jolly each other in peace!"

"Well, for a man of the world, Richard, you do take the most milk-and-water view of this affair imaginable. I am distressed to death over it, and to-day I had a plain talk with Martha. I tried to point out to her the volley of objection she would have to encounter with the family, if any rumors got back to them, and I went on to say that if, in a moment of temporary aberration, she should enter into an engagement with this stranger, it would be known like wild-fire; and just think of the public opinion—think of the *society column*! She is so full of new theories about every life being at liberty to live itself out as it thinks best! Martha is not strong enough to stand all the trouble she may bring upon herself, even if it is presented to her in a rosy light. I tell you, this is a very serious matter, and I told Martha I wanted her to go home."

"That was hospitable!" dryly remarked Father.

"It was sensible," Mother defended herself. "I

told her to go back to Park Hill, and put in the next few months studying or something, at least until she is out of mourning."

"What did she say to that?"

"She said she saw no reason why people should mourn—they paid enough for any joy they got, along the way!"

"Did she get this idea from Ludlow? Fine example of his own reasoning, he is!"

"They are both mad."

"Well, I shall be mad, too, if you don't get me a quilt or a hot water bottle to wrap my feet in."

"I asked her if I should have her trunks brought up in the morning," Mother went on.

"That was hospitable!"

"Well, she said yes—but that she feared Courtney would not be here when she came back."

"Here? Where? Is he going to move?"

"Here—on this earth, stupid! She says he is at the end of his endurance; he is a nervous wreck, and he needs her to keep the life in him going. His

doctor says that if some great change does not come to him soon, he cannot go on."

"What did the doctor get for this speech, I wonder? Well, Martha knows Ludlow has a bad cold, of course, and we can all see he is run-down more or less, but I think he would pull through without her for a little while, a few months," Father thought.

"Yes—but I am trying to tell you that he has got Martha hypnotized into believing that she, and she alone, can save his life."

"You don't say so! Well, Ludlow always was a clever fellow. Perhaps there is something in what you say, only don't push this going home business too hard."

"I insisted upon Martha's going back to-morrow," Mother confessed. "She promised to go on the Limited."

Just here the telephone rang, and Miss Cummins, who made it a point never to miss anything, crossed the hall to the dining room to see that all the spoons were where she had left them. Father went back

to his paper, and Mother answered. "Yes?" I heard her say. "What's that? You won't be home to dinner? Oh! What? *What!* My God!" And she hung up the receiver, and Miss Cummins was obliged to go back to the kitchen without being satisfied at all.

Mother stood in the doorway, and Father looked up. The expression of her eyes was enough to frighten one, and she was pale. Something of importance was about to be announced, so Father took off his hat, and respectfully waited.

"Martha is being married to Mr. Ludlow at five," Mother said, calmly. "She telephoned to say she would be glad if I would call up Mrs. James and tell her she cannot come to tea—something has come up which it makes impossible for her to keep the engagement."

"Thoughtful of her not to keep Mrs. James waiting," remarked Father, humorously, putting his hat on again.

"Wasn't it?" echoed Mother, like one in a trance. Then she added, "Martha wants us to come."

"That's sweet of her," Father replied. "But I don't see how I can go decently considering the deep mourning of both the contracting parties—I haven't any black gloves."

"Isn't it awful, Richard?"

"I don't know whether it is awful, or simply funny."

"Oh!" gasped Mother. "Oh!"

In twenty minutes, Cousin Martha came in, a little nervous, and said the carriage would be at the door at four-thirty. Then she went to her room. It was too late to take any action against the marriage, and perhaps such a move would have been against Cousin Martha's happiness, instead of for it, anyway. So Mother put in her time dressing for the street, and wondering what the bride was going to appear in. Father shut the window with a bang, and went into his room to crawl into his frock coat and pet his topper as one strokes a kitty. He smiled as he selected a pair of white gloves. And shortly the three of them silently filed out of the apartment, Miss Cummins

utterly at a loss to understand what was going on, and me unable to tell her!

Cousin Martha looked lovely but sort of tragic, I thought, in her softest black gown with the white ruche at the throat and the brooch of pearls. Certainly she was unique, and the society editor would have been unable to work in any of her stock phrases in making a word-picture of the bride.

The air was tingling with the reality of Life, and Miss Cummins and I were quiet and moody, and we forgot the episode of the black rags. "Say!" grunted Miss Cummins aloud, as the elevator door slammed at our floor, "you-all's got to show me!"

Dear me! Monday is such a trying day!

\* \* \* \*

Father gave the bride away, and during the ceremony, Mother pulled her gloves half off, unbuttoned—if you can imagine such agitation. Everybody wished the bridal couple well, and nobody cried,

exactly, although Mother almost strangled in not doing so—so her mind said to my mind in the long wakeful night that followed. She and Father did not speak for half an hour after leaving Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow. They came home looking aged, and finally the silence was distressing and Father tried to be natural and made some remark about how pretty the decorations were. But this proved to be a failure. Mother sat on the couch staring at nothing at all.

"The widows of your family make fairly good time," Father ventured, kindly enough, but with more feeling than showed on the surface. "How long have the Ludlows known each other?"

"Twenty-six days, to-morrow."

"Whew!" whistled Father. "My dear, when I am gone, I wish you would—"

"When you are gone," answered Mother, grimly, "I promise you that I will retire to a convent and hang firmly onto the habit of the Mother Superior for one year, and if I must speak with a man during that time, I will do so over the telephone."

“Thank you, darling!” replied Father, with a comic bow. “I should feel a little easier, if you would be so thoughtful!”

“Poor little Martha!” sighed Mother. “Poor little Martha!” And she cried until I thought we should have to send for her Special Physician. And Father, always gentle and devoted, was more gentle and devoted than ever. He even tried to be superficial, remarking that Ludlow would make Martha happy enough no doubt, and that so long as one went in for consolation parties, it was nice to have them a success!

But really Father was not amusing—he was just gentle and devoted.

## CHAPTER VIII

MOTHER says she wishes she had a good horse and a wilderness at her command, that she might ride off and go and go and go until she and the horse killed themselves with going! And as for the "next incarnation" (what ever that may be), she wants to be a cyclone then, so that nobody can stop her and put her to work! Her thoughts rush on to assure themselves that she believes (but I doubt it!) she was born with a well-defined aversion to everything she ever had to do; and she hates to live a life wherein the individual has no chance of being what he wishes to be—a life that is a well-set trap, baited with stuff they call love! For goodness sake! but I am glad specialists on insanity can't see the inside of her head, as I do! They might lock her up and punish her by reading to her articles on the joy of having large families.

And the most extraordinary thing about her peculiar state of mind is that to me, she is all that one could ask of his Mother. She is never without kisses and little pats and things. I think my Mother loves me, but she does not like changes. She only keeps Clara Cummins because she has a dread of making any change—and, perhaps also because Clara is good to me. But one thing is very, very evident to me—she never wanted to be any little boy's Mother!

If Mother's Special Physician had not been smart enough to say the one thing that would have appealed to her, mercy knows what would have become of us all before this! Last night, after Cousin Martha and Mr. Ludlow had shocked us by showing us they could manage their own affairs better than we could, I really did think that if that iron buckle did not strangle her, the godless cloak it holds on her would crush her with its maddening weight. When I am a little bigger, I think I can loosen up that buckle, and when I am quite big, perhaps I can wrench it open. At least, I can try.

"That stuff they call love" is a monster while it is going—Miss Cummins tells me. Possibly the Ludlows were victims? Anyway, they have caused all kinds of hysterics, newspaper write-ups, and other excitements known to man! Why, one Park Hill society column was so dressy in its account of the affair that it even took *me* into the "pen pastel," referring to me as "the heir to the uncertain fortunes of the Richard Cans!" Wasn't this deliciously descriptive of me and Life's struggles, generally speaking? This society reporter was brighter than she knew. Anything can happen, once in a while, even accuracy in reporters.

Everybody in Park Hill called on the bride's relatives—especially those who had kindly stayed called-upon by the bride's family for some seasons before. They all spoke in low tones and did the best they could to conceal their morbid curiosity. In most cases they tactfully proffered consolation-congratulations, which were double-jointed and capable of being taken anyway you liked. The sugar-

coated impertinences mostly took the form of making wellbred, casual inquiries into the groom's financial standing, delicate care being taken not to touch upon his occupation. Those who felt convinced that they positively *knew* the groom to be a grocer, were particularly tender with the prostrated lady relatives, who, like Du Barry and other old-time fashionables, received the influx of callers while in bed, extending trembling hands, and tear-stained up-turned faces. As was to be expected, exquisite commiseration was shown by all the ladies who had husbands in the dry goods business, or whose father's wealth lay in barrels (together with pickled pigs-feet), or whose fortunes had bubbled up merrily in soda water fountains.

The men members of Cousin Martha's family, told all pressing newspaper representatives that they had never heard of this especial man named Ludlow, and stated that probably the dispatches from New York were nothing more nor less than one of the usual mistakes. Whether or not this man Ludlow was a grocer, they neither knew nor cared. Good-day!

As soon as she was able to take pen in hand, the lady relative who had had sinking spells over the recent degradation of the family, wrote sobbingly to Mother, saying, "I could have stood her deceiving us, and marrying so soon, if only she had not married a—grocer!"

And then Mother, thinking to comfort the lady, wrote back, "My dear! Why take this so hard? He is a charming man, and in all respects a gentleman. And you must not forget, dear, that this is not our first shock. Weren't we once slightly mixed up with tin shears? Didn't Grandfather in his youth do an enormous business in pie plates, tin cans and dinner buckets?"

Back, special delivery, came the enraged reply—"I am disgusted by your comparison! Your grandfather was not (thank God) a grocer, neither was he a *tin*smith, as you so coarsely imply. For a short time in his early manhood, he was associated with a dignified factory (an office position, purely), where the stock was cut out by machinery in lots of at least

one hundred each. Never for one moment, either at this period of his career, or at any other, did he have a single thing on earth to do with a tin can after it had a tomato in it!"

And here Mother fell over on the couch and remarked to me that the fine lines of Life were too complicated for her!

It seemed very odd to me that we, who were so ill able to bear it, should be the center of all the confusion and contention over Cousin Martha's experiment in saving Mr. Courtney Evanston Ludlow's life—without first ascertaining if her intentions were pleasing to her friends. It must be very careless for a lady to presume to think she ever reaches the age, or ever attains the position which makes it possible for her to manage her own affairs in peace. The family wrote all sorts of excited, upsetting things to Mother, attacking the situation with epigrams and axes. They all waxed as analytical as a serious lady novelist, and the popular agreement was that "he must have hypnotized her." They all felt he

must be queer and Martha must be crazy. Mother said she knew she would be both, if something did not interfere with the U. S. mail service soon!

Such friends as wrote Cousin Martha, did not wish her well, of course, until they were prepared to say sweet things, so, no doubt, the honeymoon was more peaceful at the Ludlow end than it was at the Carr end.

Anyway, it ended in a couple of weeks. And one afternoon, as I lay kicking my heels on the couch, the elevator door was slammed at our floor, our bell rang, and Miss Cummins admitted Mrs. Ludlow.

In her eagerness to kiss me, she quite ignored Mother, and came at once and knelt beside me, devouring me with her blue eyes. I thought there might be a little awkwardness in the air, so I did the diverting thing in dropping the lid of the talcum powder can which I had been fingering, and I took both of Cousin Martha's little pink ears and drew her down so that I could give her an open-mouth kiss, such as persons of helpless age like. Her eyes filled

with tears, and she threw off her new furs, and still kneeling, opened her new coat. Then looking at Mother, like one in authority, she asked, "Has he had his three o'clock meal?"

Her assumption of responsibility, instead of irritating Mother, as I feared it might (there has always been a touch of jealousy between them over me), struck her as being humorous, and she replied, respectfully, like a well trained nurse, "He has, madam. In fact, he has been fed several times since your departure."

"Oh, dear girl, you know what I meant! I did not mean to—I—" stammered, Cousin Martha.

"I understand," said Mother, smiling. "Did you have a good time?"

"Fine—lovely. But tell me—is he getting enough air?"

They had a fairly natural visit, without any references to anything heavy in hand. Mother agreed to dine with the Ludlows the following evening. But on second thoughts they changed the time to

this evening, and Mother telephoned Father to come home to dress. Miss Cummins did not hurry back to the kitchen, after letting Cousin Martha out, until she got the gist of things from Mother's end of the wire. Miss Cummins makes it a point of honor not to miss anything, and she is always pleased to have my parents dine out, on which occasions, some one usually dines in, with her. Miss Cummins never gets around to mentioning such items to Mother, and I can't.

Well, I heard about the first dinner in time, bit by bit. It seems that the Ludlow house is most impressive, having but one marring feature—a canary bird. Mother hopes if this bird ever gives out, they won't replace it, because she says she never can associate Martha with a canary bird. But one has to associate Cousin Martha with much that is strange to us who have known her before she acquired this happiness and a funny coat-of-mail that stands in a spooky corner of the hall for guests to run into accidentally, like a burglar alarm.

"Oh dear girl you know what I mean."





During the salad course, Mother made so bold as to lean forward and say, "Just what ever possessed you two to do this thing?"

"We were driven to it," innocently answered Cousin Martha.

"Certainly!" Mr. Ludlow took up the idea—Cousin Courtney, I mean to say. "There was nothing else for us to do. I would not let her go back to Park Hill; she would not live in a hotel alone here—and you frankly told her you did not want her to live with you any more. Therefore, my dear cousin-in-law, we married expressly to oblige you, as you forced it! Won't you have one of the cheese-straws? Mary—the cheese-straws to Mrs. Carr."

I can hardly believe it, but my Father and my Mother were both so astonished by such quiet, colossal bluff, that they simply had no words with which to make remonstrances. By the time they had revived sufficiently to make any explanations or defense, the time had passed when it was opportune—or even civil—to speak again upon the subject.

Thus did the adroit Mr. Courtney Evanston Ludlow do his finest bit of work—just as easily as I drop my Mother's clock! In the face of what most men would regard as impossibility, he had done exactly what he wished; and with his own peculiar grace, he had turned the tables on the dissatisfied on-lookers. And he further strengthened his stand by firmly having them appreciate—once and for all time—that they had accepted his version of the story, without raising a breath of a murmur. It was a marvelous play—marvelous!

When Father and Mother came home, they sat down to think things over. I daresay that Mother, at any rate, was too exhausted to be quick when Mr. Ludlow sprang this upon them, and Father was so sick of it all that he was glad enough to let the whole episode slide along on the surface. By the time he realized that this point ought to be fought out to an understanding, it was too late, too. When he got home, the humor of it was all that he had in mind. The comedy was so delightful, it was almost paining him.

"I wish Clyde Finch would live with us for a while," he remarked. "I should like to see that man get the right material for a good play, once!"

"Well," drawled Mother from the depth of her defeat, "for a man that can't face happiness, I think Cousin Courtney is doing as well as could be expected. And as a life-saving station, Martha is superb!"

## CHAPTER IX

LIFE must be an extraordinary thing—I am studying it with interest. How things should happen according to books, I do not know. I know only real things. Our lives are real lives, and a strange thing has come about. Just as Cousin Martha is destined to live here, we are going to Park Hill to live. Cousin Martha thought she would never live in New York, and we thought we should never live anywhere else, all of which goes to show that one should not waste time thinking.

When Mother told Cousin Martha to-day, two slow tears rolled down her pink cheeks. I got an idea stupidly, that she was doing something to amuse me, so I sat on her lap and chuckled delightedly. But Mother's apparent effort at being commonplace brought me to my senses, and I realized that Cousin

Martha was full of sadness. Mother, too. But not me exactly.

When this hard visit was over, in came Grandmother Carr, whose sorrow at our going was of the tearless kind, which made it even more difficult for Mother to be commonplace. I felt depressed in my own way, also. I don't believe the new relatives I am going to will understand me as well as these in New York, who have known me. They are strangers and probably will give me shoes that I cannot untie, myself. I doubt if they will make good spring boards or have the consideration to wear two sets of eyeglasses on tiny chains which kindly get themselves lost in laces, for me to find and yank. Every person of helpless age is a yankist, and glad of it.

The packing, boxing and final details are trying. Mother is so hurried, and Miss Clara Cummins is so irritated that when I try to stand alone by hanging onto the couch cover like a ship-wrecked sailor making his last attempt to live, they let me fall—and stay fallen. I never before was so lonely.

This afternoon I really felt sorry for Mother. She has tried to do too much, lunching and dining with people who could have entertained her any time during the years spent in New York, but who never got around to it until they heard she was leaving. Up-gowns amuse me! They so often postpone entertaining you until you are in some awful confusion and too exhausted to see your way out of accepting the added strain on your raw nerves; and they give you flowers mostly after you are dead, or when you are wildly dashing for a train and already have too much stuff to carry. But, perhaps, if this were not true, there could be no touching little magazine verses entitled, "Alas! too late!" P. S. I got the suggestion for this idea from Mother.

Well, between trying to be polite to everybody and having to decide on the disposition of every article, personal and household, that belongs to us, Mother is all un-strung again. I do all I can to help by musing up piles of linens that are stacked ready for the packer. I had just decided to dust up one corner

of the room with an embroidered "centerpiece," when Mother, who was standing on a rocking chair (useless wear on the nervous system), uncarched from the top shelf of the closet the bonnet with the white ruche and the black clouds, that was now *unnecessary encumbrance No. 316*.

"Good heavens!" she crossly exclaimed, clinging to the shelf as the chair almost rocked her off her balance. "What in the name of kingdom-come am I to do with this?"

Suddenly Miss Cummins' kinky head was thrust into the room—her feet, which were encased in a pair of Father's shoes that she was in the habit of borrowing unbeknown to my parents, were conservatively detained in the hall. "Mis' Carr?" she spoke in tones between a plea and a command, "Mis' Carr, say, please mam, don't do nothin' to that mournin' bonnet—don't throw it away, I asks you, Mis' Carr! Give it to me, please mam—and somebody will jes *have* to die!"

Well, this kind of thing went on for a week until,

before we could realize it, Cousin Martha and Cousin Courtney had said goodbye, and the P. P. C. cards were all posted, and the janitor had carefully looked over all the trash sent down from our apartment on the dumb-waiter (finding, to his disgust, that Miss Cummins had appropriated everything worth while), and a carriage stood at the door of our building.

Father, Mother, Miss Cummins, luggage, flowers, books, magazines, and myself and my white Teddy Bear all drove to a noisy place which had a glass roof growing over it to keep the smoke in. There were many chimneys there with wheels on them, all of them doing their very best to make the breathing poor. Mother would have had the windows open, had we lived there, while Father would have made remarks. I never breathed such solid air since Miss Cummins and I so unhappily sterilized the horse's tail which formerly constituted the Grecian Bun at the back of Miss Cummins' head.

Clara held me, and sobbed all the way. By the

time we went through the gate to our particular sitting-room on wheels, Clara's face had all run together. She cried so hard and so long that she looked like a composite photograph—vague, you know, and pathetic. Even Mother's only decent scissors and my rubber doll and the other little things that nobody ever gave her, but which I knew were in her pockets—(she, naturally, would not mention these trifles, and I could not)—did not seem to comfort her for the loss of me.

It was not long until trees and houses were running past us, almost as quickly as they pranced by when we were out in Cousin Courtney's automobile. It would have made the joy keener to have had Banks with us making remarks of disappointment because we never hit anything, but still, even without him it was diverting. Banks' memory was dimmed a little bit by entertaining winks from the Cummin-colored man who wore a white jacket, and who always stayed lost when we rang a button that was worn on the woodwork of our unsteady sitting-room.

I heard them saying that travelling with a baby is most wearing. Perhaps it is—but it didn't wear on the baby—not this time. I did just as I always do, only more of it. If I wanted to shriek in the middle of the night, I shrieked. Of course. Why not? Wouldn't you have done the same? You don't have to answer! Mother and I know.

Well, after three days' worth of vacant lots and red water tanks and cities that were so small they had to wear the names of themselves on the railroad station for fear they would get mixed, we at last arrived at Park Hill, too late for me to be sitting up. I sniffed at the strange people who met us at the local place where the wheeled smoke-stacks live in great numbers—but without any glass roof growing over them, this time.

If any of these relatives had any eye-glasses, they wore them out of sight. They looked unpromising to me, so I sniffed some more. A gentleman with curling gray hair and a fine smile (if one felt like being smiled upon), threw out his chest and said

with pride that to be the grandfather of so splendid a child, was the crowning reward of a hard life. Ha! If he thinks his life has been hard up to the present number on the calendar, I just wonder what it will be from now on? They don't seem to feel it necessary to explain these introductions to me, but I imagine that he of the gray hair belongs to my Mother—anyhow they both have noses just the same. If he produces some eye-glasses, I will be his little boy—perhaps.

There were an awful lot of them, among whom was a lady with gray hair, too, who kissed me and kissed me. As she seemed to be enjoying it, I let her go on. She cried a few tears over me—don't see the point, myself. I have not done anything yet to make her cry. I haven't had time. I suppose she is my other grandmother—they say grandmothers act like this. I certainly should be relieved to know where she keeps her eye-glasses. Very annoying not to be English speaking. My vocabulary consists of four words, none of which is eye-glasses. I can

say, "Mummah," "Dadda," "bye-bye" and "kitty"—but I don't want any of these.

Mother, who knows me best, hurried me to bed. And, believe me, I was glad of it, for they hadn't stopped hugging me or even got their hats off, before they started in to discuss the grocery business as an adjunct to the family. And if there is a topic that is worn threadbare already, it is the Ludlows. If I have to stand much more of it, I shall scream!

Besides waking up the next morning to find it daylight, just as it is in the morning in New York, I have become quite interested in my new real friends, and have also found time to have a birthday, whether I wanted it, or not. I am one year old, and have three new Teddy Bears, although I am Mother's real Teddy Bear. I sit on her lap, and she pokes my ribs and squeaks like my toys. The game is fairly amusing—when Mother does not over-do the rib-poking part. However, I am for it, if she feels any good comes of it. I got many presents—I got—but I won't say what I got, because once my Mother re-

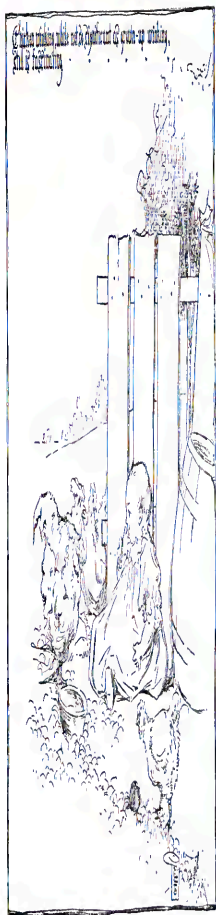
marked it made her tired to have to hear what people had to eat at parties, or to have them tell her what they got for Christmas when they wrote her about once a year—every July or August. Never mind what I got—but I liked 'em!

The hose with water pouring out of it on the lawn, is the best thing yet. We didn't have one of these in the New York apartment. I like it better than the dumb-waiter, though it would be good, now and then, to hear Miss Cummins telling the janitor what she thought of the way he sat down on the job of keeping the heat up—I should dearly love to hear her voice echoing in the elevator shaft, blending with the larger tones of the janitor's retorts, while Mother was out. But loveliest of all it would have been, if Miss Cummins and I had had this hose and this fresh water up on the seventh floor when the janitor put his face in and yelled up the shaft! I wonder if Life has many might-have-beens that are as joyous thoughts as this?

We are soon to leave this large family for an apart-

ment of our own. I shall be sorry, for I like to be talked baby-talk to, and given many things that it is quite wrong I should eat. It reminds me of Miss Clara Cummins. I can't get over the way Clara cried when we parted, it was such a surprise to find that her tears were white, like Mother's. I supposed that the tears of one who was dark brown almost unto blackness, would be tan-colored, at least. Not so, however.

All these demonstrative persons are enthusiastic over me, but I miss her who used to call me "de Bootiful," and I haven't discovered an eye-glass in the whole family! I heard him of the curling gray hair asking if anybody had any idea where he had mislaid his—and that is the nearest I have come to seeing a pair. Besides, I find we are related to a black, woolly dog, a cat that is not rubber, and chickens that wink from the bottom, up; not from the top, down—which is the way my young uncles wink. The chickens we had in New York had had the leather-dusters taken off of them, and were un-wink-





ing, and arrived in brown paper bundles. These that are cousins of mine, are different. I often crawl to the wire fence that grows up between them and me, and lying very still, I watch them wink. Chicken winking, while not so significant as up-grown winking, still is fascinating. I wish Miss Cummins could see me here!

But, with all the baby-talk and unsolicited kisses I am getting (see, I must say, if I speak my mind truly, that I believe you can rent more depth of devotion than you can inherit. I know that among my new relatives there is no one who would kill a janitor for me, or keep her temper down if I were exasperating, which I have the art of being, often. There is nothing but an omelet back of these chicken's winks, but when Miss Cummins winked at you, you knew it meant you had a friend worth while.

One of my new aunts has given me a big rag doll which she has called for herself—Beatrice. My name for my doll is Miss Clara Cummins. I can't speak English, so there are no hurt feelings, but Cummins stands,

## CHAPTER X

I CANNOT say how great a miscalculation we made in fancying we were fleeing from Ludlow conversations and complications, by leaving New York. Why, the real story lived in the East, was child's play in comparison to stepping into the continuous anti-climax we found awaiting us in the West. Everybody we know in Park Hill is someone who once was a friend of Cousin Martha's—but who isn't now, because she lives too far away to take them flowers when they are ill or give them dinner parties. Cousin Martha is out of favor because she presumed to marry a grocer, without consulting her calling list or the calendar. Everybody feels very superior.

Several silk-lined ladies have been in to call on Mother in our new home, speaking in low, constrained tones and radiating the impression that they feel un-

comfortable at being seen coming in. One would suppose from the manner of the callers that they were visiting the scene of a murder, and prayed not to be caught at it. All this because Cousin Martha married without telling anyone—even Mother did not know until two hours before the wedding, but this item, naturally, would hardly calm the injured acquaintances. And then some dear friend started the stirring report that to her absolute knowledge the bridegroom used to scoop prunes out of a bin, *himself*—so there! And ten to one, he still did it when they were rushed for help on Saturdays—but she wasn't sure of this—this was just her own theory, to be sure, but the chances were she was more than correct. If, as they said, he had an automobile, it probably was a rented one, and his being a Yale man sounded well, but they'd like to see his sheep-skin. No man who was a graduate of a good college would ever have allowed the woman he loved to treat her friends so that they could not, with self-respect, continue to befriend her—and to think of all they had done for

that woman, too! And as for this man Ludlow's having a system of grocery stores all over greater New York and conducting his business from an office, as some one of the more generous-minded persons had given out—well, this was nothing short of a campaign lie, and they could prove it!

One of the dames calling on us to-day, cleared her throat twice and then hesitatingly asked, "Um—a—a—how is Martha?"

Mother thanked the lady and said that Martha was very happy, having a charming home and a delightful husband.

But the dame went on, quite recklessly, "Well, well, I am glad I'm sure! But has Martha any friends in New York?"

"Oh," replied Mother, thoughtfully, "yes—if there are any such things in the world as friends, she has."

"I am so glad," purred the lady softly. "But she—she naturally has no social position in New York, has she?" This one of "our select social leaders" as the Sunday paper had classed her for some years,

and an old intimate of Cousin Martha's, would probe further!

Mother looked at her, unruffled, and emotionless. "Well, n-no," she drawled, lightly. "No, she has no position of any consequence—she associates with just the same grade of people she always knew here."

The longer one thinks this over, the prettier it is—but I am sorry to see that my Mother reflects the attitude of the women with whom she speaks. If they are cats, she is a tigress, and is quite as sweet as they are. But the sly digs of the claws go awfully deep with her. She is all keyed for insults, having a large piece of kindling wood on her shoulder all the time, although this stick is like the iron buckle at her throat—one can't see it.

This is my troublesome age. I am no longer content to be put down somewhere and stay there. Not at all—not for a fraction of an instant, believe me! I crawl everywhere, but I am trying to walk, with the result that I fall down and scream. I fret the whole live-long time because of my teeth and my natural

inclination. The lady who lives in the apartment under us (and who allows her boy to romp in the house with his puppy until one would think a sham battle in progress,) complains, subdly, of my crying—every time her boy has waked me. "Your baby must be ill, Mrs. Carr," she says. "He cries so hard every night about eleven. It does not annoy us, of course, but have you ever tried spanking him?"

We haven't any Miss Cummins out here—Mother does everything for me, and I help her all I can by keeping things constantly mussed up. My Father says he is going to have a flock of hens follow me about to pick up the trail of crumbs I leave behind me, and my Mother says she is going to invent a machine which she can turn on to bring me up—one which will say, "No-no, darling—don't do that!" But such a machine would not bother me any more than my Mother's tired, persistent voice does—which is, to tell the truth, not at all.

When we passed the down-stairs lady's door to-day, she popped out, as if by accident at that moment,

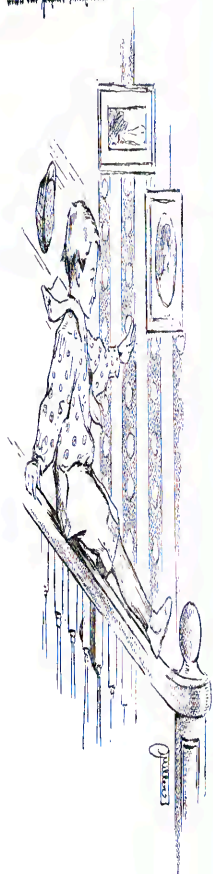
and said, "Your baby falls down a great deal, doesn't he, Mrs. Carr? It never would worry me, of course, but did you ever try taking him in your lap and trying to interest him in quiet things like pictures?" And just here, the lady's rough little boy of twelve almost knocked us down in his hurry to pass us with his rough little playmates, bent upon their favorite game of yelling and sliding down the public balustrade, from the top of the house to the bottom.

But don't think I am the only noise in this building, please! Besides my howling, we have alarm clocks; machines which roar out distressing comic songs through large horns attached to them, so that the neighbors may miss none of the disturbances (the down-stairs little boy has one which we hope will die of over-work soon); pianos, some played by hand and others by foot, but all of them played; beaten biscuit; dogs that are left to bark and whine alone by the hour; other children and their friends; bridge parties at all times; besides all kinds of a row going on next door, where they split the morning

kindling in the court at twelve at night (Pa always forgets it until just before he turns in, I suppose), have a house full of boarders, an untuned piano and a young lady daughter with a terrible voice but good lungs—and an alive duck in the back yard, which, while being fed-up to grow fat for Christmas, is improving his last chance by quacking all night, every night. This is a long enough sentence, I hope, but I could not stop until I had told you all the reasons why I am not the only noise living here. I often long for the quiet of a little talk between Miss Clara Cummins and the New York janitor!

Mother's nerves are worse than they have been since we used to live down where the waters beat upon the sands, and we watched it stay night until the land birds began to sing. Her capacity for suffering is remarkable. She gets more pain out of the daily annoyances of life, both coming and going, than anyone you ever met. She suffers because we are disturbing the down-stairs lady, and she suffers because the lady's down-stairs boy is worrying us.

Then another terrible game of selling and buying  
down the public highway





But she suffers most because she sees what a mistake it is to suffer, and she cannot help suffering. Sorry.

In this wonderful climate it is not fashionable for persons of helpless age to sleep out of doors, as it is in the less reliable climate of New York, and because I have to take my nap in my wagon on the balcony, one of the boarders next door sent word by the janitor of our building that I was a case that ought to be investigated. He has watched me on cold mornings in my woollens, drag myself to a sitting posture, weaving to and fro in my pathetic effort to torture myself into staying awake, because my Mother felt I needed the sleep, and she needed the rest.

The down-stairs lady called us on the 'phone to assure us that my shrieking on the balcony did not annoy her (she was driven to the back part of the house as a rule), but did Mother really feel it advisable for a baby to be taking in so much raw air through his mouth?

I can walk—I could walk when I was fourteen months old, but it was wobbly walking. Now I

am of fifteen months' age, and to-day I walked to the corner to post a letter with my Mother. It was the first time I ever walked out with a lady, and I was very proud. But my Mother is a tired lady, and the letter she carried was a tired letter, full of longing for New York, and a night's sleep. I wanted to crawl up onto a wet, soggy lawn, but Mother could see no reason in this desire. I wanted to sit down on the car track, but this, too, met with lack of sympathy. My Mother sighed. Possibly she was bored—nobody had insulted her about her cousin's affairs for nearly a week.

We went home, and Mother carried me up stairs. She is not strong enough to do this, but I had no intention of even trying to be my own elevator. In the house, she made me comfortable, and then dropped on the couch and closed her eyes. But I stood at her head, fretting and crying by turns. I, too, was bored. Mother lay still trying to tell herself that she was quite happy and that I was lovely and that all Life was beautiful! I knew from the damp eye-

lashes that this was a day-dream and one which ought to be broken into promptly, so I hurried off and got some nasty, sharp-edged little blocks, which I forced into her ears, and stacked on her face, and with which I struck at her cheeks. The more she brushed them off, the faster I put them back; and each time I put them back, I hurt her a little more than I had the time before. I don't know exactly whether I did this on purpose, or not. All persons of helpless age do such things, especially when constantly thrown into the company of un-playing up-grown.

My Mother is very un-playing—she cannot help it. She wants to be working every moment. She always thinks of the things she ought to be doing—things that count for something—every time she sits on the floor among my blocks. Does it, or does it not count for something for an up-grown to play with blocks? Both my Mother and I have wondered. And, pray tell me, when toy-makers are putting paint on the outside of blocks, why don't they put a little bit of joy in the varnish just to help one's mother? .

To-day, my Mother raised herself rather lumberingly from the couch, and sat down on the floor and did the best she could to amuse me. But it was one of my rude days, and I rebelled every time she put one block on top of another. Books did not please me, the top nearly drove me wild, and I threw my rag doll, Clara Cummins, straight in her face! I think she would have cried, if she hadn't been too tired to cry. She just looked me right in the eye, and said, sadly, "I would do better for you, little boy, if I could. I am afraid it is not in me to play—you probably feel the lack of spontaneity. I don't blame you. I suppose there isn't anything for us to do, but sit and work it out, together."

I have often wondered just how old my Mother thinks I am. She talks to me in up-grown English, and leaves decisions with me, quite as though I were Father! Having paid me this tribute in her treatment of me, I daresay it is unfair of me to have taken every atom of her strength, in the first place, and then, deliberately to use it against her—day in and day out,

night in and night out! But I will be older, someday, and perhaps—different. And I am not the only person of helpless age that does these things!

A little boy comes to our house who is four months younger than I am, better looking than I and considerably smarter—but just as difficult. They call him "Sonny," and I don't know what his water-on-the-head name is that he got in church. His Mother and my Mother have been friends many years, and I trust that Sonny and I will not break into their sweet relationship, though we are doing the best we can! Sonny does just what I do—he gets teeth and keeps his parents up all night, and causes complaints from the other tenants. His Mother, too, is a very tired Mother.

Sonny and I are rough with each other, but rougher with each other's toys. Our Mothers try to keep us separated, and to spare enough of the playthings to do for the next session, and each says that her boy is at fault. We don't want our own cookies—we want each other's, which we snatch, screaming fit

to call the police. When at last Sonny's Mother has got him in his go-cart, headed for home, the downstairs lady comes up to see us. "You had a little visitor to-day, didn't you?" she begins—as though there could be any doubt about it! "Of course, I don't mind—but, seriously, do you think that child's mother shows good judgment in taking him to a place where he is so upset that he is apt to rupture himself crying?"

And it not infrequently happens after one of these exciting Mothers' Meetings, that some silk-lined lady comes to call on us, and tells Mother (as though she were conferring a great favor in propounding a new and helpful theory!) that Mother, in all justice to *me*, ought to have another darling little baby for *me* to play with. And each lady, in turn, has her electric runabout or her brougham kept waiting, while Mother civilly tells her to stay well within the sanctum of her own province, in her customary answer—"I cannot see, dear madam, that it will be any harder for my son to go without a playmate, than it will be for me to produce one for him!"

श्रीगणेशाय नमः





## CHAPTER XI

I FRIGHTENED them, rather, by having small convulsions in the night. They sent for a physician, but by the time he arrived, I had gone to sleep, spending most of the night in *most* of Daddy's bed. I allowed him the extreme edge and what was left over of the covers, and in the morning he said it wasn't any worse to sleep with me than with a section of barbed wire fence.

Father gives me my bath lately. It is an unusual thing, I know, for one's Father to give baths. He and I like the idea, however. It is a game with us. Father gets me wet, and then he gets me dry, but Mother gets me clean! I like to have Father attend to this detail of my life—I have more time to play with the soap.

I did not look as ragged as the rest of the family this morning, after our hard night. However, owing

to having turned greenish-ashen and threatened to die last evening, I was allowed to hold a tiny, stuffed ducklet that was given me my first Easter by a lovely lady, but between which and me, my Mother ever stands. I always want to pick out the glass eyes, but Mother is trying to save the duck until I am older and more considerate. Personally, I feel that the duck's destiny is a doomed one, anyway, and I might as well have him one time as another. They are so charitable about ducks, especially the alive one next door. I was not permitted to hold my treasure, unwatched. It is hard for a little boy to have the child's natural interest in finding out what grows inside of things combined with a Mother who anticipates him!

I find that the Park Hill doctors indulge in that same contemptible practice of taking the food away from sick babies, which I had heretofore supposed originated and ended with Mother's Special Physician. And yet, I hear the up-growns saying now and then, that in some ways the West is broader than the East! Possibly—but this is not one of the ways.

A stuffed clock that one is not allowed to destroy is a pretty poor substitute for one's breakfast. I know.

I have tried my Mother's soul to-day. I am sick, and glad of it; I fret, and I am glad of that. Sometimes, I cry. Some of it is traced to boredom, some to cussedness—and the rest is just baby. I staggered out to the dining-room, and pulled the cloth off the table before the dishes had been cleared away. This proved diverting, but did not start the day very well.

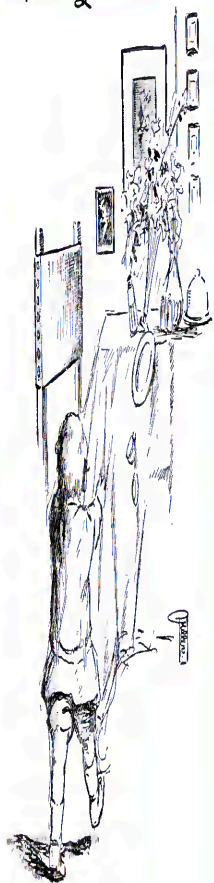
When Mother made the beds, I clung to the brass railings, and howling madly, I grabbed each sheet and blanket as it was laid in place, and pulled it to the floor. This caused Mother to take me firmly, but with kindness in her touch, and to set me down on the floor in the next room. She remarked in passing, that she did not intend to have her white blankets thrown on the rugs, whether I was sick or well. Her manner implied she meant what she said.

I daresay it would have been nice of me to have let her alone, as she was worn out with a series of bad

nights and neighborhood complaints. But no—not at all! What normal baby would have done the decent thing? None you ever heard of, believe me. There are Mothers who will tell you that we help them with Life's cares—but these are Mothers who are old and who have grown gentle toward their by-gone trials, or the young Mothers who have someone with whom to divide their cares. The quite tired Mother of the moment, knows that babies taunt up-grows at times, as animals have been tormented in arenas for the fiendish amusement of morbid spectators. The principal difference between a bull and a matador trying to kill each other, and a nervous Mother and a teething child trying to be nice to each other, is that the Mother hasn't any applause to ease the situation.

To-day I taunted my Mother, and the more it seemed to upset her, the harder I taunted. As my Mother sat trying to mend something that must have her attention at once, I stood beside her, lurching for the scissors, breaking her thread, yanking at the cloth

"and pulled the dirt off the table where the dishes had  
been cleared away."





and swinging on her forearms. I turned to her a tear-stained little face, full of rage and demand and discontent. When she could no longer endure this, she set her work aside, and tried to show me pictures, but I wickedly tore a page out of the magazine, which settled this possibility of entertaining me, for my Mother put the pictures away, saying that books must be respected—even by little children.

She then started to put the sitting-room to rights. Each thing she picked up, I threw down, if I could get it. When she went to sweep the floor, I established my position directly in front of her broom, my mouth being wide open to send out shrieks and take in dust. But I had gone too far—I got a surprise! My Mother drew back with her broom as one might make ready for a tennis ball, and the next thing I knew, I was a mass of infuriated babyhood—on the other side of the room!

Here my Mother spoke aloud, saying, "I cannot see the reason in pressing human beings so hard that their actions bear no relation to their own standards!"

It did not hurt me to be swiftly rolled across the room with a broom, nearly so much as it shocked my Mother to have administered a broadside of just deserts to one of helpless age.

Humiliated, she picked me up and took me to the kitchen, where she put me in my high chair, while she tried to sort out the dishes I had broken from those that had escaped me when I cleared the breakfast table for her. She gave me playthings, which I threw upon the floor, stiffening out in my confinement and yelling at top voice. She offered me a drink of cooled water, which had been boiled for me. I hurled the cup out of her hand. I much prefer plain pipe water, such as Miss Cummins used to give me in New York, unsterilized and right out of the faucet. Miss Cummins never told this on us, and I could not.

Mother said something she would not like to have me repeat, and picked up the pieces of the cup. Then, she ignored me and worked. But I had no intention of being ignored. I resolved to make a personally-conducted tour around the edge of the tray

I turned to her a tear-stained little face, full  
of rage and demand and dissent.





of my high chair. I meant to crawl all the way around the rim of the tray, and sit down in my chair again, just to show Mother that I am a real person—not a theory on Race Suicide. Well, I got as far as making a promising beginning, when—when I fell heavily to the floor, hitting my head a vicious crack on the oven door, which lay out just to spite me, open.

Tell me, do you think I got picked up and cuddled and told that it was a beastly shame of the oven door to hurt my darling baby head—and that when I am big enough we will kick the oven together—miserable thing? You do? Well then, there is one thing certain—you don't know my Mother as well as I do!

My Mother's hands, now strong in desperation, held me fast under the arms, while the rest of me was just dangling in air, as I dangle my doll, Miss Beatrice Clara Cummins, and close to my lace I heard her saying, "Now, young man, you have imposed upon the fact that you are teething, just about long enough! You are fifteen months old—quite old enough to begin to cultivate the instincts of a gentleman. I have

done for you all that I am able to do—including not shaking you until your eyes rattle! You will now have the pleasure of your own society!"

She went with me to the sitting-room where she gave me toys, which I threw from me. Then she left me, and I heard her close the dining-room door to the kitchen. I still creep when I want to make good time, and I reached that door as fast as any snake could have got there. Screeching, I scrambled to my feet, and beat upon the wood. I choked once—stopping my own noise just long enough to hear the down-stairs lady's voice on the back porch, saying sweetly to Mother, "Excuse me for coming up to make an early call, Mrs. Carr, but I could not help wondering if you knew how hard your baby is crying?"

In polite, but fairly chilly tones, Mother replied, "My dear madam, do you know that George Washington is dead?"

A little later, when I had run down, so to speak, being unable to keep up the standard amount of racket, on no breakfast, I heard a sound that told a

story to me. My Mother was opening and slamming the icebox door. I heard her say once that our icebox door made a sound exactly like that of a brougham door when banged to by a groom; and that the slam of a carriage door always did her soul good—it suggested the lighter and more gracious side of Life!

It must have been a long time before my Mother trusted herself to see me, for when at last she came, she found me asleep on the dining-room floor—right in a draught. If I had made the day's work too heavy for her so far, I now saddened it more, by letting her find me, a sick baby, asleep on the floor—in a draught.

We rocked together a long time after this, peacefully. When we stopped a moment, I looked about for my stuffed Easter duck. If you will believe me, my Mother—with all the things that had claimed her attention this very trying morning—had found the time and opportunity to hide that duck again!

My Mother interests me greatly.

## CHAPTER XII

FATHER, Mother and I have enjoyed a visit, with Aunt Catherine and Uncle Max at the Springs. Aunt is delighted in her pride in me. She takes me out just when the car is passing, so that her neighbors may see who is visiting her.

They seem to take Aunt Catherine rather seriously at the Springs, which amuses Mother who has always had an older sister attitude toward her—which act counts, I daresay, for Aunt Catherine's evident relief that out of the confusion of Life, Mother got me, upon whom to vent some of her energy.

It is very wonderful out-of-doors here. The country places make a loosely joined village, back of which are the glorious Rocky Mountains. There are so many autumn leaves on the lawn that by the time you have tried to kick each leaf, your cheeks are

It is very wonderful out-of-doors here.





wildly red, and ladies will make comments on the depths of your brown eyes. By the way, my eyes have at last settled into their permanent color, and stopped one embarrassing personal controversy.

But what I like best about the Springs, is the gravel walk in front of Aunt Catherine's house. You can't imagine what adorable pebbles grow in the driveway. To-day when running away from Mother I came upon a bone with a handsome vacant hole in it. I filled this hole four-thousand-nine-hundred-and-sixteen times with gravel, which quickly ran out at the other side.

To-day we had tea with neighbors whose library runs two stories high and has a fire-place big enough to have for a play-house. Rough stones, too big to fit in that lovely bone I found, make the chimney, and near the top is a deer's head. My! I 'most went crazy over that deer! I wish I had half a chance at those glass eyes!

Out into the room and around the fire-place is a funny low seat, or foot-rest, and on it I put a plate

of cookies, in fine order, like a row of soldiers. I took a bite out of each cake in turn, sometimes offering the ladies tastes. I adored the ladies this afternoon. They sat holding their tea cups and making flattering remarks upon my looks and conduct—watching me the while, as though I had within me strange and great things to teach them.

I fancy this gathering, with the possible exception of Mother and myself, was what is called "society," and we met one exquisite young matron who said I reminded her of her own child, whom "she always tried to see for an hour a day, anyway, although it was sometimes hard to manage it."

Mother replied that she always tried not to see her child for an hour a day, although it was invariably hard to manage it!

Our hostess' husband was my favorite—next to the deer's head. He was so interesting—but of course, he would be interesting because he is a physician. Physicians are very wise. Observe them, yourself! The Doctor, instead of rudely throwing

me into the air above his head, as most men do by way of introducing themselves to a baby, ignored me. It is always effective to ignore him whom you would attract—a little. The Doctor sat down and talked with the ladies—but he took out his watch and idly dangled it on the end of the chain—then waited. He knew the answer before he took out the watch. This is the reason that I walked to him and put my hands in his.

But the Teddy Bears and Miss Beatrice Clara Cummins are waiting for me in Park Hill, so we have to go away from the Springs. I have had a fine visit, but I shall miss the lady of the cookies, the gravel and the empty bone, as well as Aunt Catherine and the dead leaves.

My parents are training me to pick up bits from the floor—but there is one thing they do not know. I get the bits out of the waste-basket, myself, and put them on the floor, in the first place.

I wear socks always, never having had a long pair of stockings, such as "Sonny" and most little

boys wear. Perhaps we cannot afford the long ones? The down-stairs lady has remarked she has noticed that I am wearing heavy shoes. Of course, the pattering of my feet above her head does not disturb her, you understand, but she wonders if my Mother does not agree with her that softer shoes are better for such little feet. If you lived under me, you might feel the same way. No telling.

I fill my Father's shoes with small blocks, which he invariably sees after having put his weight on them. I also put a tiny block in my Grandmother's bag one day, and when she got home she cried. When she had cried, she telephoned us. Grandmothers are apt to weep over the acts of their grandchildren, when the same acts got a spanking for their own children. When you weep in the wrong place, it is a pretty good sign you have the making of a real grandmother in you.

I cannot turn on the water in the bath tub yet, but it is not because I have not tried.

My toes now touch the foot-board of my high-chair,

which proves that I am of eighteen months' age, and glad. I can see out of windows by straining a little. I used to think I should never grow so tall. Occasionally I get some real food, but over my egg I want to be leisurely. Why hurry? I want to be flirted with and coaxed to eat it, but my Mother is such a business-like person!

"Dicklet," she said to me to-day, intensely, "if you are going to dawdle over your meals, I know I shall go mad!"

But I think I shall dawdle just the same, if you don't mind.

As long as it is supposed to be such excellent discipline for the up-grown character to have us of helpless age thrust upon it, I think we ought to do the best we can to make the fullest use of our opportunity. I should hate to feel, in the end, that there was any calculation ever made by my Mother that I have not altered, or smashed up altogether. Certainly. So, I dawdle—while purple-red spots form on my Mother's cheek bones, and trembling with

nervousness, she smiles—just like the wax ladies who wear ready-made gowns in shop windows.

I don't understand why ladies are not as amused by holding a spoon before a pouting red mouth, as they used to be by sitting at a piano for hours over some difficult piece of fingering. Surely, our Mothers love us more than they loved their rented pianos? My Mother has dawdled at times over her scales—she has told me so many days—but when I dawdle over my egg, she feels like a prisoner. Is it not extraordinary? And goodness knows what might have happened to-day, if an old lady had not come in to call and tactfully suggested that I might grow up some-day. This cheerful possibility had never occurred to either of us.

I must explain that this picking-up business they are drilling into me, works both ways. Father has to go away, and he packed his trunk while Mother and Amity Catherine were at the far end of the apartment. As Father packed, I unpacked, and got no thanks. It was a low steamer trunk, and most convenient for one of my height. Daddy made many

*no-no* remarks which did not bother me at all. I took everything out of his trunk, every time he went into his bedroom to get more clothes. When I found that this promised to be unpopular, I began putting in extra things for him on top of his white waistcoats. I got in three Teddy Bears, Miss B. Clara Cummins, a ball, an ash-tray of out-blown matches, two blocks and a jumping-jack, and I was just stepping in myself to keep him from being lonely when he opened his trunk at the other end of his journey, when Daddy came back and found me too much.

He mopped his brow and dashed for the ladies, and said with emphasis, "For the Lord's sake, can't one of you women come in here and stand between me and this child, long enough for me to make my train?"

Aunt Catherine looked at me to-day, when she had settled herself for a little visit with us; she looked at me critically.

"Your head is a sight!" she said under her breath. "A perfect sight! I don't believe you have had your

hair clipped in all your life, and it is way down over your ears and almost into your eyes. Come with me, child!"

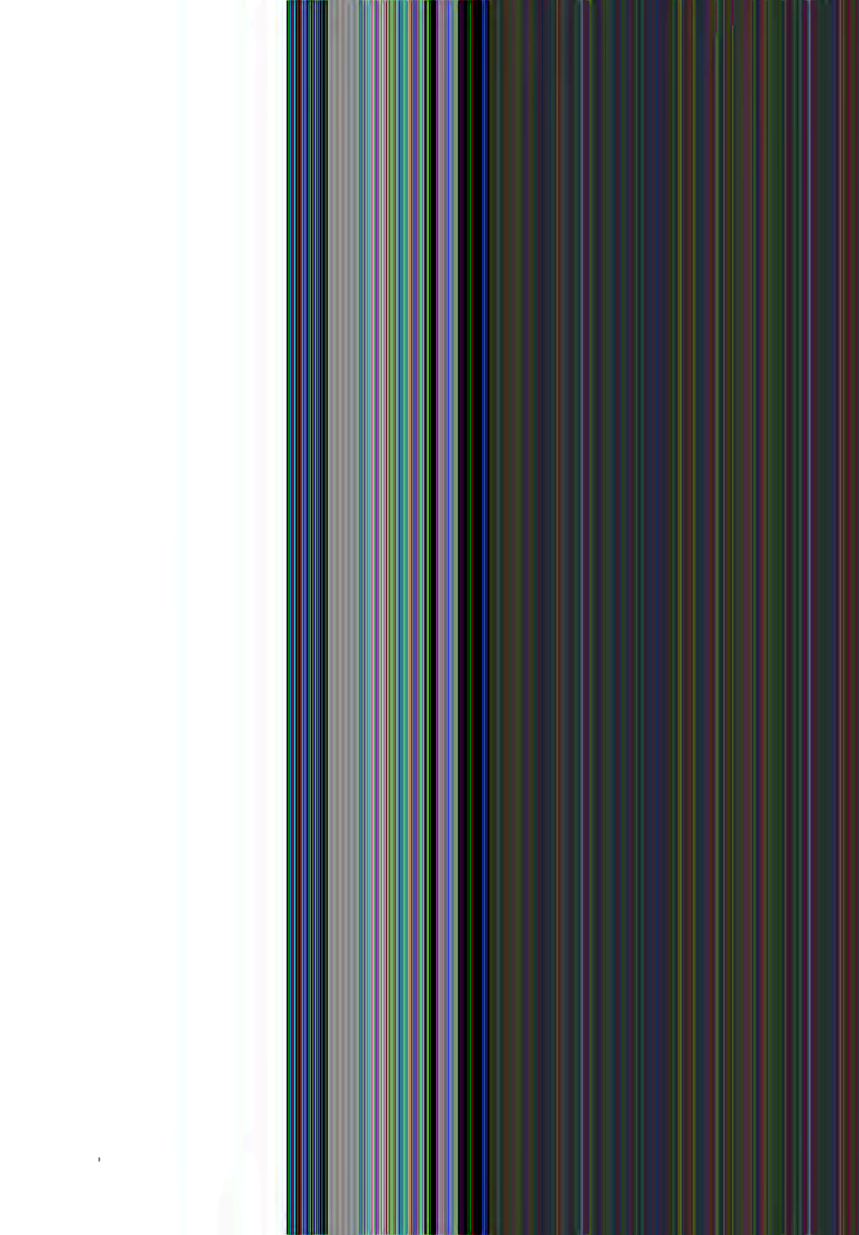
I scented trouble, but Aunt Catherine is very tall and very commanding, and often is taken seriously. I trotted along beside her to my high-chair, and she took it and me to the back porch. I was fascinated by the evident momentousness of the occasion. I was quiet. The next I knew, I was sitting in the chair, and Aunt Catherine's firm white hands were occupied—one holding my two, fat little hands, and the other, flourishing a pair of scissors.

Had I been able to speak English, I could have informed my aunt that these particular scissors were the old ones that Mother used to cut odd bits of things, like picture wire. They were dull and sawtoothed, rather, and were good for hair-pulling, but awful for hair-cutting.

The next instant, the aunt made a dash for me, and I ducked and screamed, as a bunch of hair fell to the floor. Mother flew to us.

Wolff, Mary Ann and Mary Ann





"Catherine!" she demanded, dramatically, "what are you doing to my child?"

"Giving him a much needed hair-cut!" replied the aunt, with vigor.

"Well, don't put his eyes out!" snapped Mother.

"Possibly, you'd better hold him, then," advised the aunt.

And if you will believe me, my Mother turned against me in the fight, holding me with all her strength! We soon collected an audience in the alley and on all the back porches of the block, while my aunt jabbed at me, clearing vacant spots on my head, upon which I felt the chill air blowing. But when they tried to "trim my bangs," I heard the mad hurry of a man coming to us, three steps at a time. I trusted it was the police, but it was only the janitor, whom I had supposed to be my friend. I once heard him telling Mother that he used to valet a man who went in for wild boar sticking, and in this crisis I quickly saw that he had contracted some of his former employer's love of the fight. Anyway, his blood was up,

"Here, Mrs. Can," he panted. "Give me them scissors!"

The two women relinquished their weapon, and fell on me—one putting her weight on my chest, and the other holding my frantic hands. Moses! How I shrieked! The boar-sticking janitor got to work at the back of my head, and tore out a sort of high-water line up where one's bump of veneration is conceded to be, but sometimes isn't. They were all excited and red in the face, although Mother called to the neighbors not to worry—nothing dreadful was happening—just a little trimming up of my hair.

With one vicious dive at me, which resulted in exposing a patch of scalp over my "soft-spot," the three demons fell back, and set me free.

"Richard," said Mother bending over me, tenderly, "I call it a miserable imposition! Can you forgive me, and give me a little kiss?"

I did not want to, exactly, but still I put my arms around her neck, for after all, I am the little soul of Mother. She had tears in her eyes—tears that came

after she had done what she wanted to—like so many of Life's tears. "Catherine!" she half sobbed, "look at this beautiful child! He looks positively moth-eaten!"

Moth-eaten—indeed! That is much too polite a term. If you ask me, I can tell you I look Indian-raided!

"Well," weakly the aunt defended herself, "it was the best I could do—and save his eyes."

I feel blue enough at the rough treatment I have received from my best friends, but still, I have solved a mystery. I know, now, why the Springs takes Aunt Catherine seriously; and when I am bigger, I will explain it to Mother, as the matter seems to be one of such interest to her. Aunt Catherine probably cuts their hair for 'em in the Springs—and Moses! I should think they would take her seriously.

## CHAPTER XIII

I THINK yesterday must have been what the up-grows call Christmas, for Father came home, and everyone met at my grandparents' where there was a huge pile of articles in the middle of the drawing room floor, covered over with a sheet. The game seemed to be for all to sit on the floor, regardless of stiffness in getting down, and one at a time, each person drew out a package done up with bright ribbons, and opening it before all eyes, he gasped (regardless of getting the wrong thing), "How nice! Just what I have been wanting for months!"

I sat on the top of the pile most of the time, enjoying the sensation of feeling the presents settle under me. Strange—nobody snatched me off. Being the only grandchild among many up-grows, has its advantages. Several bundles were for me—containing things to which I prefer our talcum powder can.

I behaved well all day. I was worried. My

thoughts were upon the alive duck in our next door neighbor's back yard. I had heard Mother suggest that they must be fattening it for Christmas. I was anxious to get home to see if the duck's incessant quacking had ceased.

It had. Never another sound from him—poor little duck! And my stuffed Easter duck is put away, and not speaking English, I have not yet hit upon a successful way of asking for him. One really ought not to allow himself to grow attached to ducks—their destiny is so certain.

The most thrilling time we have had lately, however, was the night before Father arrived. The little boy belonging to the down-stairs lady, came in with his parents after the theatre; and between 'em, they slammed every door in their apartment, and finally congregated in the bed room just under us, and right up through the court, we heard the boy say, "Let's poke Sport in the ribs and make him bark!" Then followed a romp which was noisy enough to wake the dead duck.

The down-stairs family had made such a point of complaining at every sound from me, that Mother thought they had little to do to start me up, themselves, in the middle of the night. She stood the disturbance as long as she could, and then, so annoyed she hardly knew what she was doing, she put her head out of our window. Through my crying, the boy's romping and the dog's yelping, she made herself heard—and distinctly. I doubt if this section of the country ever listened to more telling eloquence, poetic justice and neighborly exchange of ideas than were combined in the few remarks that Mother made to whom it might concern.

A stillness followed that would have flattered any great orator. The dog stopped breathing. Nothing stirred—not even the spirit of the departed dock. A head was thrust out of every window near us—boarders' heads, mostly. Everything was night and intensity. The climax lasted longer than some climaxes, and was interrupted only by the down-stairs boy's tip-toeing with his puppy out into the

kitchen. Even the whitewash on the court walls was impressed.

Then, of course, we had days of remorse and things. You might know we would never spare ourselves the unusual amount of suffering this opportunity afforded. We were self-conscious, and avoided meeting the down-stairs family. A fleeting glimpse of the doglet's tail getting around the edge of the building, was quite enough to embarrass us. This stump-speech of Mother's suggested Miss Clara Cummins and the dyed black dress material, and the similarity of method fussed Mother more than the whole down-stairs family was worth. She deeply regretted not having taken more conventional, and less effective, measures. But I understood it all. You see, ladies sometimes let things go until they are upset beyond their self-control, hoping all the time that the difficulties will eventually adjust themselves. The down-stairs lady was wiser than Mother, I fear—she rendered her complaints on the installment plan, and kept her system clear. Her scheme

was fine from her standpoint, but it was a terror for us!

But the strained relations eased up a bit when the down-stairs family "went on the road for a while with poppa." I took this occasion to sleep well at night, and I refused to wear any shoes save my little felt bed room slippers in the house. I didn't knock over a chair and shake the house, once, the whole time they were out of town.

But they came back. Most things one is not in love with, do—if you just give them time. So, thinking our neighbors might miss their old grievances if I stayed good, I un-eased myself, and dropped all the books I could, and cried often and loudly. I never disappoint people who are nerved for trouble, if I can help it.

An anti-climax developed at this point. The down-stairs family stormed down town and told the agent that they could not stand the loss of sleep, and they thought if they were expected to endure the up-stairs baby, their rent ought to be reduced. But

the agent settled the matter promptly by saying that he would be glad to cancel their lease anytime on one week's notice. Whereupon the down-stairs family had an attack of human nature—when they found it was easy to go, they wanted to stay. The agent, you see, is a relative of mine, and is solid for me. Ha!

Feeling the tightness of the present relations, Mother thought she would make the advances toward an armed neutrality, as she had caused the open break. So she took a dainty bowl of wine jelly and went down stairs, saying to the lady when she came to the door, that as they had not yet had time to re-stock their larder after their trip, perhaps this bit would help out with luncheon. But the down-stairs lady pretended that she had never met Mother, and did not understand. No doubt it was a trying moment. Anyway—we never have wine jelly anymore, I have noticed!

And the strangest part of all is that the dog belonging to the down-stairs boy disappeared the next

night. I don't know what foundation they had for their suspicions and aspersions, but at once the downstairs gentleman stopped speaking to my Father on the street. Things are generally serious when the men take part in apartment-house feuds. Personally, I don't believe we had a thing on earth to do with the tragedy. We are not the only people with whom that dog was unpopular. This passing was just one of those things resulting from some unknown natural cause, which is classed by the up-grows as a coincidence. Possibly the puppy got into the alley barrel and ate some of that wine jelly, and it was too much for him, being unused to unpasteurized stimulants. I can't say. But the janitor always looked amused every time anybody in the building inquired for "Sport." The janitor had the sense of humor—except when cutting the hair of persons who much prefer he'd mind his own business. He had, however, been obliged to listen to so much assorted conversation on the subject of this particular boy and this particular dog, that he gave it out coldly, he

8  
But the good lady perceived that she  
had never met Muller





thought he could stand the loss without going into mourning.

I hope all this does not give the impression that we live in a tenement? Oh dear me, no! We pay very high rent for our troubles. But we can't stand it any more, and we are moving soon. We are convinced that apartment houses are no places for boys, babies, dogs, pianolas, parties, alarm clocks, nerves, ducks, squeaking rocking chairs or machine-sung comic songs. Apartments should be occupied only by felt-soled shoes, gossip and thick skins. We will run a furnace ourselves, deal directly with burglars, and walk six blocks in mud ankle-deep to the nearest car, if we have to, but no more apartment-houses for us—I should say not!

Every day I sit on my Father's knee in the late afternoon, and find in his pockets many things. The cigars that are there, one must not crush. This would be a *no-no*. To muss up the cigarettes would also be a *no-no*, but it is all right to threaten to do so, and if one has a true Father, such as I have, he will stand

for 'most a hundred threats, patiently. In an upper waistcoat pocket is a miniature of a placid face and an un placid soul—my Mother. This I kiss each time I find it, quite as though I had discovered it for the first time. It is etiquette to put the locket back in Daddy's pocket after kissing. It would never do to make-believe to throw this on the floor—this would be a dreadful no-no.

After the cigar-cutter has been snapped forty-seven times, we think of books, Daddy and I. I am not allowed to touch the up-grown books; but on my way to get my own books, I pretend to take a large volume. Thus I shall do seriously, just as long as I can provoke my Father into saying, "Not *those* books, Son!" I am fond of this sentence—it is part of our daily play. I am devoted to the sameness of things, day in and day out. Isn't your little boy?

There is something they have not yet discovered. I found a fine blue pencil on Sunday morning when I got up early, and they did not know I was out of my crib. I went into the sitting room and took out

of the case one up-grown book at a time, and wrote in it many things with this lovely blue pencil. When I thought each volume sufficiently decorated, I put it back in the orderly fashion they are teaching me. But I was disappointed in getting only eight books marked up, when I heard Mother coming.

They may find me out, in time, for one of the victims was a borrowed book. But our own books may know their own decorations in silence always, for I marked up only the good ones that nobody ever reads, such as Taine's History of English Literature, which I have heard Mother say she hoped to get around to, someday. I trust when that day comes, I shall be big enough to run!

## CHAPTER XIV

WE are moved. I am glad. We live in a little house on the edge of town, where we can see two hundred miles of great high mountains, and where the wind blows so that it is hard to stand up. We have not blown over yet. It is lovely to have a house that is quite one's own. Why, the very knowledge that I can cry at night all I want to, and not disturb a soul, has taken out of me the desire to cry at all. I am cheerful every minute.

In the back yard Daddy has made me a sand-pile, in which I bury all little things, like nutmeg graters and thimbles. I keep much busier than I did in town, although I was said to be rather active there. Last evening I put my tin steam yacht in the nice cool oven, and I know Mother got a shock and thought the Spanish fleet was upon us, when she went to make the toast this morning. And the exhaust pipe of



Daddy has made me a sandpile, in which I bury  
all little things, like nutmeg graters and  
thumbles.

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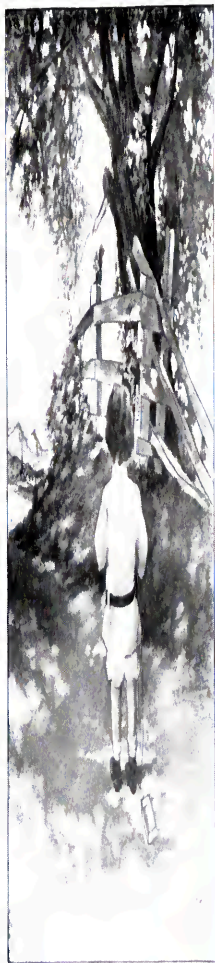
the bath tub is already stopped up. The up-grown don't know why, but I do. The key to my yacht is carefully poked down there. I would explain if I could, but I can't. I talk a great deal in my own way, which does not seem clear to the up-grown. I don't see why they, who are so much better informed than I, cannot understand me, when I have no trouble at all understanding them.

The old lady who once suggested to Mother that I might one day grow up, gave me a horse that is not constructed at all like the vegetable man's horse. My horse has a head stuck on a long, thin body which is a sort of little sister to a broom-tick, and the horse's hind feet are two wheels, one of which I got off after some difficulty, and the other I hope to dislodge soon. I ride this horse by the hour, and he never gets any more tired than I do, myself. I have a pair of overhauls and a big hat, and on the whole present a formidable appearance. I am Mother's cow puncher, so she says.

They have a dog three doors from us, which is

supposed to be ugly with children, but he is very cordial with me, which is accounted for, no doubt, by the fact that I am a cowboy on a broncho—not "children." This dog and I eat together, but nobody knows it. His plate is an old, unwashed pie dish, out by the rain pipe from the roof. He gets odd bits of hash, and the old soup meat and the cake that turned to lead instead of angel food. These we enjoy together. And these informal meetings with "Teddy," remind me of Miss Clara Cummins, in a way.

I am a most trustworthy person. They let me out to roam the neighborhood, and Mother refuses to have her temperature kept high because of the things that might happen to me. She lets me out for the principal reason that she can't keep me in. I can undo the hooks on both gates. Mother says if she gave in to all her apprehensions, she would be in the insane asylum, and believe me, if she were not, I should be! Mother once heard of a young man who turned to his over-solicious Mother and said,



*They let me out to roam the neighborhood* page 162



"Will you let me breathe for myself, Mother? You smother me with your care!" I know if I ever reproached my Mother like that, it would cut her to the soul. She believes that even babies have a right to be treated like responsible human beings, and while she seems ever ready to stand between me and distress, still she says I must have my own experiences, and might as well begin one time as another. This theory, however, does not keep her from flying to the door every few minutes to see what I am doing.

I have learned to open doors, and while I appreciate the fact that I am not supposed to be on the back porch, owing to my love of inspecting the ice box, still to-day I got in there. It was fine. I first fell upon a huge bowl of eggs, which I threw, one at a time, onto the floor, making a nice skating sort of foundation for a crock of soup stock, which I had some trouble in upsetting. Then there were some little dishes of vegetables and other things which added greatly to the interesting swimming pool. I sat down and slid around, joyfully. Then I rubbed

the eginess into my hair, and I was just about to try to take a horse-back ride on a leg of lamb that went splendidly through the slippery waves, when Mother appeared.

Mother said something emphatic, then dragged me from the fun, and noted that I had painted the walls of the porch as high up as I could with a new pound of butter. Then I got spanked. Thank you. I think the spanking was almost as good as an example of Mother's kind of activity, as the back porch was of mine. I fancy Mother would have cried, but Mother is rather un-crying. She is willing enough, but the sobs seldom get past the buckle at her throat. I do somewhat better, myself. The stair-case, the kitchen floor and the bath tub were all eggy. So sorry. The ice box is a very bad *no-no*, indeed.

We had just finished our egg shampoo on me and the house and Mother, and were soberly glaring at each other in the sitting-room, clean and discouraged, when a silk-lined lady with flowers in her hand and malice in her heart, came to call. She was one of

Cousin Martha's suit-case sympathizers when Cousin Martha was thrown into black. She always called twice a day on Cousin Martha at that time, with a suit-case in each hand, to feed her aromatic spirits of ammonia to dull her over-wrought nerves, and to explain to her that by the time she was out of mourning, her tan shoes would be an old fashioned cut—and wasn't it fortunate they wore the same size? She said she would like to borrow her opera wrap, and gracefully suggested that by taking in her tailored jackets, she could use them, and would just love to take the hateful things away where poor little Martha would not be constantly annoyed by the sight of them, full as they must be of painful associations!

I fancy the silk-lined lady was a most "smart" person, because she did not speak of automobiles, but of motors. Mother says this is the supreme test of the "society" woman, especially when the motor referred to is not the property of the speaker. Then, too, I am sure she must have been a "society" woman, because she cut away at once from all the amenities

supposed to be the pass-word of Society, the very foundation of the profession, as it were; and she promptly jumped into the private affairs of her hostess without the slightest hesitation. This sort of thing Mother would not resent so positively in an unlettered woman, as she always does when she meets the characteristic in someone who openly stands for the polite life.

"How is Martha, these days?" casually inquired the silk-lined lady, after having automatically remarked that I was "a perfect beauty," and mentally noted everything in the room with the hope of finding it in poor taste.

"Martha is well, thank you," replied Mother, keyed for some sort of a blow.

"I can't get over the shock Martha gave me," fretfully continued the dame.

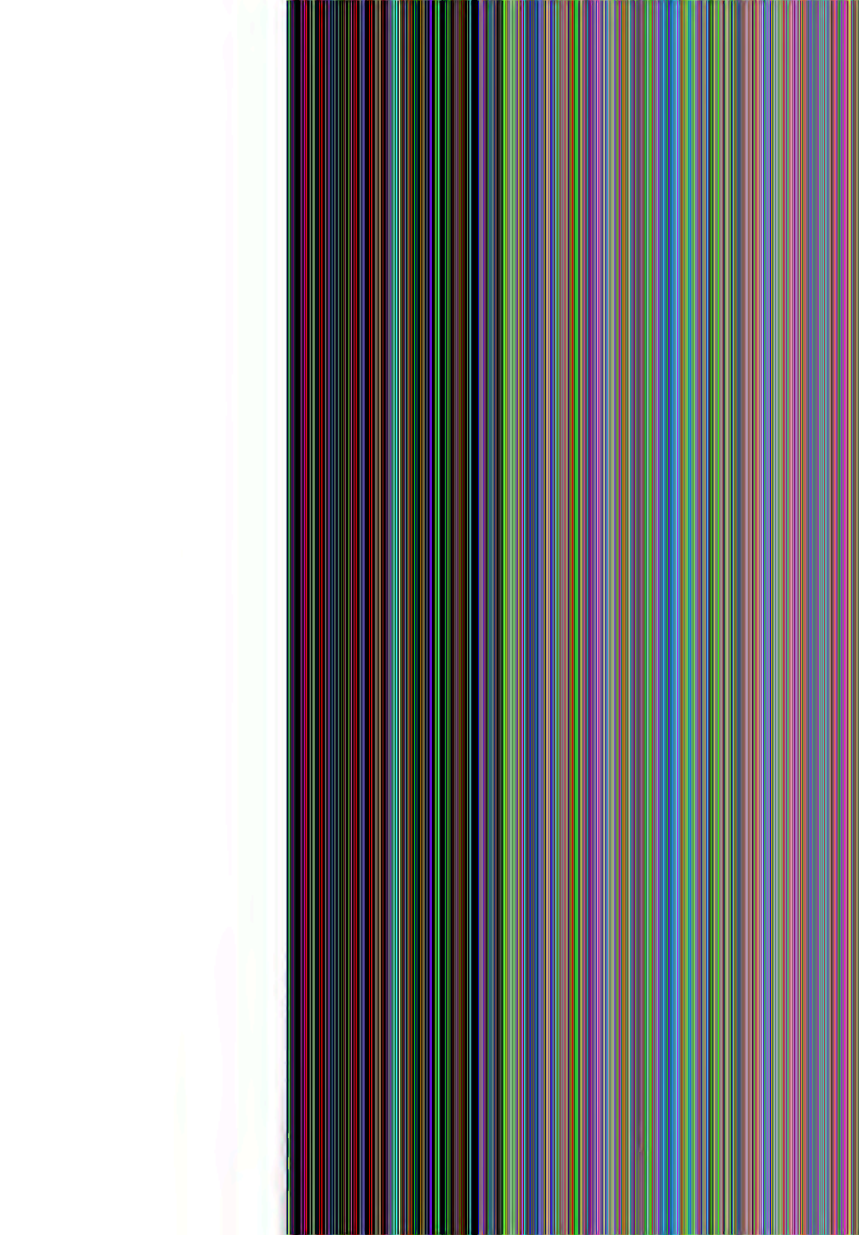
"No?" Mother ventured.

"No! I might have stood her marrying again so soon, if only—if only she had not married a grocer."

"I am afraid your prolonged associations with dry

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goods have made you super-sensitive," Mother suggested, sweetly.

The silk-lined lady's husband was the chief of one of the dry goods houses in town.

"Well, well, you see—" the silk-lined lady hurried on uneasily, "we—that is, John has very little to do with trade, himself, you understand! He is the manager of a large business."

"Mr. Ludlow is the manager of a large business, also."

"Really?" said the silk-lined lady. "I am so glad. One hears such misleading things, you know. I was told he put up orders, himself. But even so, it is rather dreadful to be a grocer, isn't it?"

"Well," argued Mother, in the very friendliest of tones, "what is the difference, when one comes down to facts, between your husband and my cousin-by-marriage, except that one of them has rows of ready-made coats and trousers stacked upon tables, and sells bone-casing and darning cotton; and the other

merchant handles breakfast foods and dried apples?"

"Oh! Such a vast difference!" exclaimed the silk-lined lady, in horror. "A grocer is a *grocer*, and one can't get away from it, while *John* is simply in business sitting at a desk, like any other well-ordered man."

"A marvelous distinction!" agreed Mother, with real merriment in her eyes. "But might not a grocer sit at a desk? That is, when not sitting at the dinner table, in an automobile or in an opera box?"

"Does—does Mr.—? I never can recall that person's name, somehow! Does he sit at a desk?"

"Y-yes," drawled Mother, patiently. "Where did you suppose he sat—in a cage?"

"Now you're laughing at me!" petulantly protested the silk-lined lady. "And this is a most serious matter! You know as well as I that Society draws certain well-defined lines for the occupations of men and the conduct of women, and the man who allows himself to get so far down as to—"

“As to earn twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars a year,” Mother finished.

“No—no. Not at all. So far down as to be stamped by such a commercial and irrevocable a curse as bulk olives, cannot possibly—”

“I cannot, for the life of me, see how so spiritual a soul as yourself, could ever have stood so many years’ contamination with Monday bargain sales!” Mother cut her off.

“Let me explain, my dear,” the silk-lined lady insisted, “that I regret my husband’s work; but at least, pray do understand that we would never be in such a business in New York!”

“Why not in New York?” Mother asked, with interest. “I should think it would be better to be in the dry goods business in New York, than here—in New York no one would know you.”

Ladies are most interesting. They say such awful things in such pleasant voices. They hurt each other so deeply, generally over some one’s else affairs, and show their wounds so little.

The silk-lined lady kissed Mother's cheek, and Mother (who never cared particularly for kissing ladies) kissed her back. The silk-lined lady kissed me, and said, in parting, that I was a wonderful child, so unusually intelligent and charming. Many thanks. She paid no attention at all to me. Were she and I to meet to-morrow, she would not know me, I am sure. And I should not know her—not unless she had a suit-case with her.

I do not care for the silk-lined lady. I prefer Miss Clara Cummins. If one must fight, give me the clean, fair, brutal combat, such as Miss Cummins dealt the janitor when he stuck his hand in my face once as I lay sleeping in my carriage on the New York road, and woke me. Miss Cummins was not a lady—the Third Avenue Elevated was her "motor"—but I like her brand of fight better than some I could mention, if it were polite to do so, which it isn't. So sorry. When Miss Cummins came after you, she did not fall upon you with flowers in her hand. She was perfectly square. She advanced with a rolling-

pin, or a section of unmistakable conversation, and you knew from the first just where you stood with her. She was not a lady (and I was disappointed in her crying just plain white tears, when I had hoped they would be brown), but there was something in her that I love.

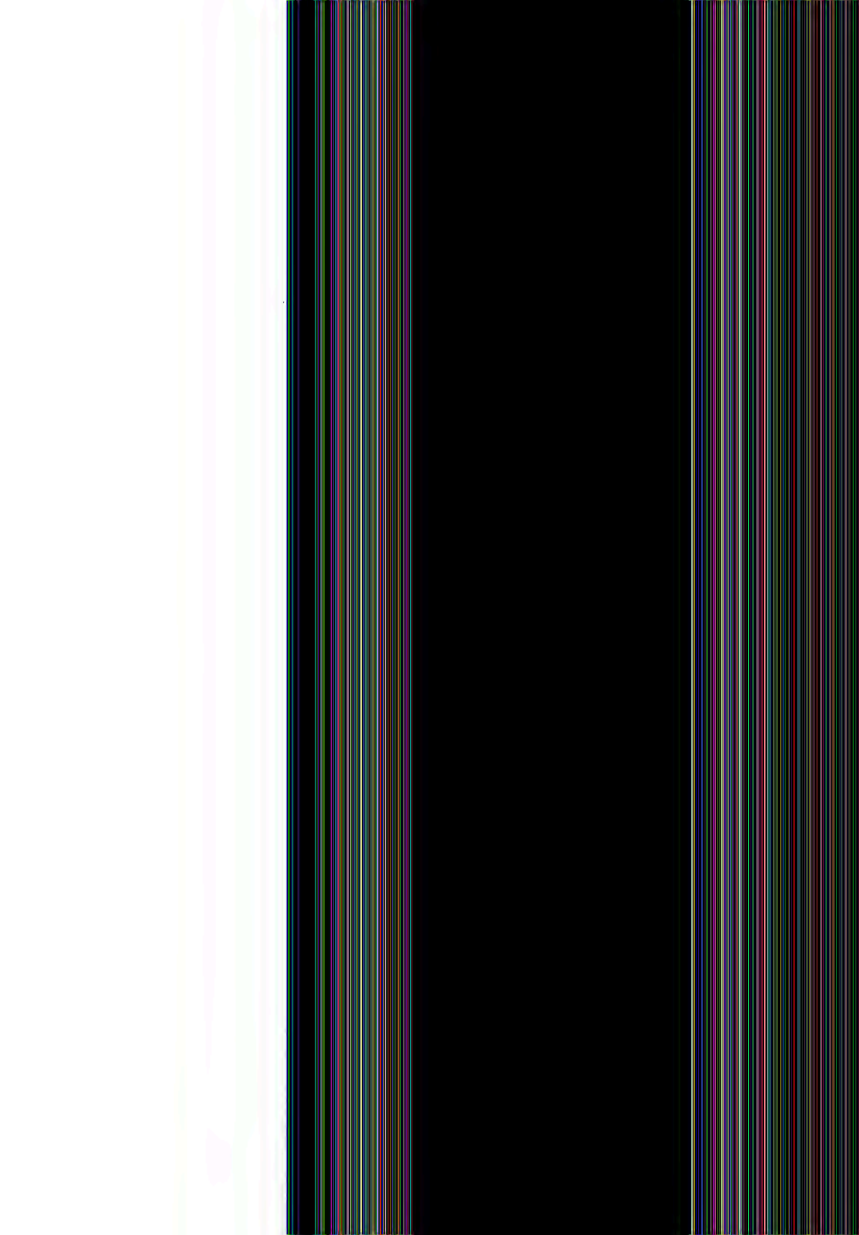
## CHAPTER XV

A STRANGE thing have I discovered. When one stands in the sunlight, a funny, blackish thing appears beyond one on the floor or wall. When you stoop to pick it up, it stoops too! It does not cry out when you put your Mother's scissors into it, or try to do so. It does everything you do, and it stays with you as long as you stand in the sun. Very odd.

I am of twenty-three months' age, and English speaking, in moderation. I kiss my Mother's hand before and after getting bites of sugar. A visiting lady—an un-silk-fined one, this time—said to Mother that she was teaching me to break many hearts in later life, and Mother replied that probably I would be up to this time-honored man-pastime, anyway, so I might as well learn to do it gracefully—which would, in a measure, compensate the ladies for their wee twinges of loneliness!

If does everything you do, and it stays with you  
as long as you spend in the sun.





When there are tea-absorbing persons present, I go through my parlor tricks as though I were giving an initial performance, but truly, there have been dress rehearsals. Mother teaches me things, and my "charm" as the ladies call it, is not entirely of the variety generally classed as "native."

Yesterday that other very tired Mother was here—she who owns him named Sonny—and before her my Mother said, upon giving me a cookie, "Say 'Thank you, sweet Mother!'"

"Sank you, sweet Mummah!" I repeated in creditable English.

Then she who belongs to Sonny dryly remarked, "Well, dear, if *your* child does not appreciate you, it is not going to be *your* fault, is it?"

In answer my Mother laughingly asked, "What is the point of having a son, if you cannot delude him into idealizing his Mother—at least, up to that dreaded time when his sense-of-humor begins to develop?"

Ladies have much to talk over, mostly things which

their opinions cannot alter—"problems."—I think these things are called. Mother says that, in the beginning, one child is as favorable material for training as another; in other words, that she could do as much with any little boy as she can with me. That other Mother does not agree with her—this is one reason why the two ladies have enjoyed each other for so many years. Sonny's Mother insists that my good appearance is due to my nature, which no amount of discipline could make or mar. (Three cheers for Sonny's Mother!) But, to tell the truth, I do not believe that ladies think. They feel a lot; and when they meet, sometimes their feelings rush into large quantities of impressive words; and then, they think they have thought things. This is a theory, only. If it is wrong, please excuse me.

I like to be discussed in my own presence—it gives me a warm sense of importance, which I try not to betray in self-conscious glances, or by sweeping my eye-lashes across my cheeks. The up-grown are constantly resolving to stop this practice of analyzing

me before myself, assuring themselves that beyond doubt, persons of helpless age take in a great deal.

Mother thinks—pardon me!—Mother feels she would quite as soon have an orphan as a child of her own. She got this off to her Special Physician once in New York, just as though she meant it. And the Doctor said, thoughtfully (we did not pay much attention to what he said, but we always liked to watch his expression)—“Well, I believe in inheritance, myself, but then—I am a Virginian.”

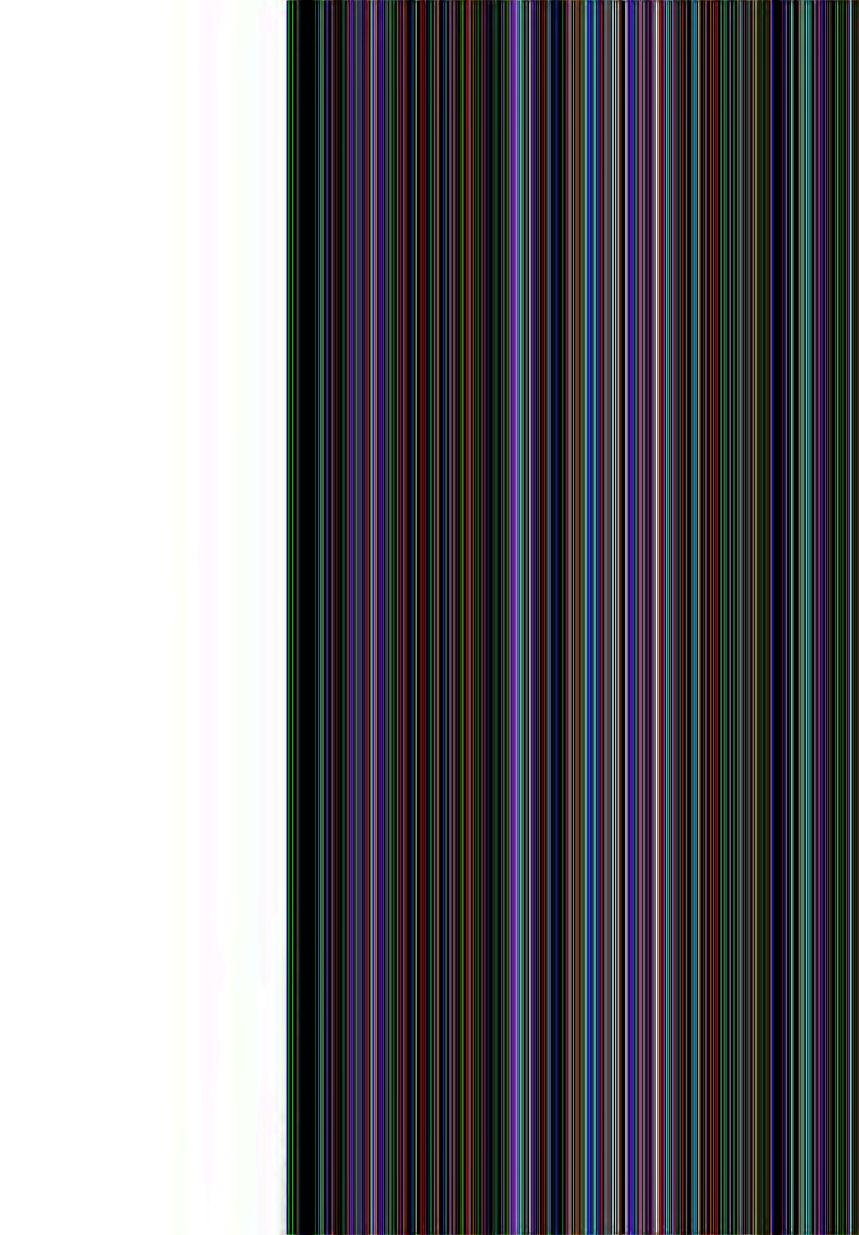
Really, it is most perplexing to decide whether or not one should take ladies seriously. They say that men-beings have been undecided in regard to this matter, before. However, if they go to importing any orphans, I shall snatch their bottles away, and bump them over in a heap on the floor. It is bad enough to have Sonny out here, grabbing my cracker and moving the dining room chairs, when I am trained so that I am happier when they stand in place. We don't need any orphans—I can keep the house sufficiently mussed up, myself. And any-

way, Father says he already has two children—a boy and a girl. He means Mother by the girl. Hal! Father has a pretty good idea of what to take seriously.

My Mother and that other Mother make many plans for the future friendship of Sonny and myself. They have everything all mapped out for us—how we shall enter the kindergarten together, the grammar school, the preparatory school, and go to college together and stand by each other through Life. May-be! But I don't think much of our start. We hate each other cordially, being delighted that we do. Each wrenches things away from the other, wanting everything in sight. Each bites the other—that is why we both howl. The only thing we have in common is a certain delight in the whirlwind of comment that follows one of our bouts. After every scene, each tired Mother explains to the other—(both in the same breath and in the same words, they have been over the ground so often)—that never does her child show to such poor advantage as when with the other! But, in the future, by seeing more of each

Two men are shown - one is standing and the other is sitting.





other, and getting used to playing with other babies, they do hope that—that—that—but we never let them finish. You'd be surprised at the amount of noise there is when both Sonny and I yell our biggest, and the ladies try to make themselves heard above us. Honestly you would.

I suppose it takes a good many years to understand humor in all its phases, for to-day, to my chagrin, I exhibited a marked lack of appreciation of a joke. I still think the joke must have been un-funny. We were sitting on the couch after Sonny had been got out of our neighborhood—Father, Mother and I. Father suddenly said, "Son, let's have some fun with Mother—let's choke her."

He grabbed at her throat, but left her room to laugh. It seemed fearfully serious to me, and I beat my Father in the face, and shrieked in terror, "No-no, Daddy—no-no! Dis is my Mummah—dis is my Mummah!"

My parents, seeing that I was in earnest, stopped their play, while I burst out crying and clung to my Mother. Father apologized and tried to explain

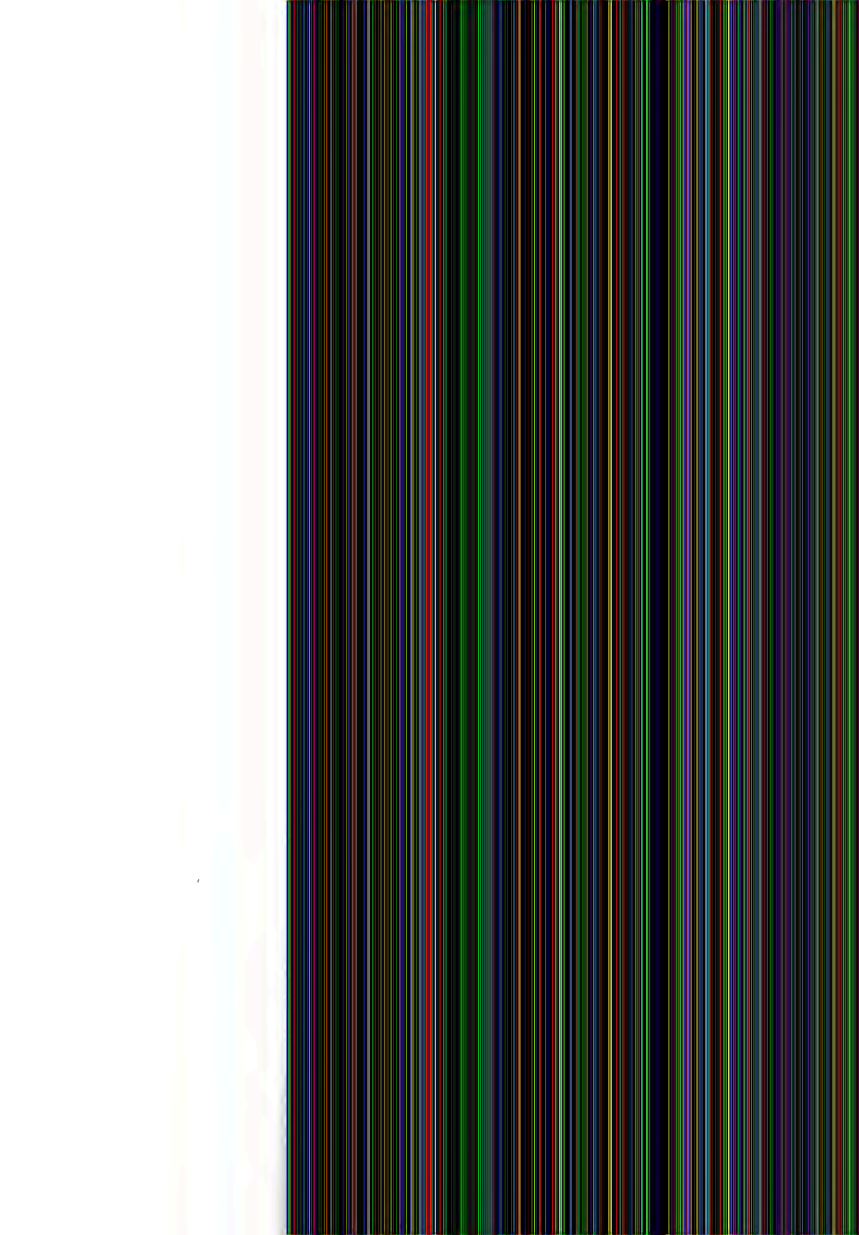
that he was only playing, and Mother kissed me gently and said it was good to know she had a champion in her baby son. Maybe they thought this funny, but I did not. I don't believe Daddy knows about that iron buckle at Mother's throat, and he might—why, I shudder to think what he might do!

From then until bed time, the pathetic little expression they sometimes remark on my face (the one behind which there is nothing), settled down upon me, and I was un-smiling, quite. Mother says that sometimes I look as she used to feel—whatever this means. I had an attack of it now, sitting silent, even when our next door neighbor came in—she for whom I steal flowers from the other neighbors. She tried to divert me by saying something about a person I have not met—the sand man, she called him. I know the ice man, the milk man and the vegetable man. Daresay the sand man is one of the same lot. "What time does Dicklet naturally retire?" asked the lady.

"He never 'naturally retires,'" Mother answered.

Wherein the sand-man is one of the same lot.





"He is artificially put to bed about seven. It is a tragic moment for us all!"

I like this next door lady. I know where the salted walers are kept at her house. She knows I know. She doesn't talk too much—one thing I admire in her. Her husband says he thanks the Lord he hasn't any kids. But just the same, he kisses me every time he is perfectly sure nobody is seeing him do it. Mother asked him once if he would trade his fishing outfit for me and he promptly answered, "I should say not!"

He may change. No telling. I will wait.

The up-grows at our house would have an easier time finding the button-hook they want, if they would look on the inside of their shoes before putting their feet in and getting dents in themselves. Then they talk about *children* never learning anything by experience!

Kissing a pleading lady through the banisters as one stands part way upon the stairs, is fairly amusing. Zest is added to the game by standing one step too high for the lady, causing her to strain herself. Par-

icular care should always be taken to duck in time to let the lady kiss the wood. After this one should endeavor to look exquisitely innocent. Ladies want most the things they humiliate themselves to beg for. They are generally keen to get a kiss from someone who has none to give. At least, such has been my experience.

I am aware that in telling a story, one should carry it to a natural conclusion; but I can't see that there is any natural conclusion to a life, and I am telling simply of a life—my life. I fail to comprehend how a conclusion to a life could possibly be a natural one. There would have to be devilment, miscalculation or premeditation somewhere along the line! I never expect my life to be "naturally concluded," but perhaps one can't say as much for ducks. Anyway, there is a fact not yet fully taken into consideration at our house, and that is that I am growing up. Unnoticed, I have learned to shove chairs up to high furniture upon which ink, ducks and other things are put for protection from persons of helpless age.

To-day, while Mother was having a mental battle with herself upon the question which was the harder for a sensitive woman—to take a gas stove all to pieces and clean it, or to live with a greasy stove—I was up stairs on a chair, silently lifting down from a shelf that little stuffed duck that was given me by the lovely lady, on my first Easter.

O joy, how long have I waited for thee! I took a fall out of that duck that was beautiful in its completeness. I got his toe-nails off; I got one downy wing worked off the wire that held it; I got a fierce hole stove in his starboard side, and both glass eyes dug out, when Mother interrupted the operation by coming to see what caused her darling to be so quiet. Too bad. But I had done almost all I could. It wasn't a happy moment for me, altogether. But I must say that I stood the natural conclusion of my meeting with my Mother better than the duck stood his with me.

However, between the spanking and annoying bits of fluff from the duck's clothes which had worked

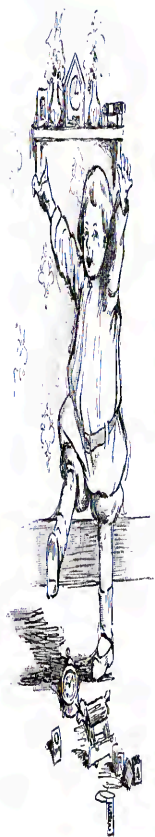
their way into my nostrils, I was forced to see that most pleasure is paid for one way or another. My pleasures are paid for mostly in one way.

But one thing interests me. Do the people who believe that lives and stories arrive at natural conclusions, argue that this duck was concluded when they caught him in the wood-pile and chopped his head off, and packed him off to Mr. Vantine's shop in New York Town, or when I spent my few unchaperoned moments with him? And after all, is this ducklet's conclusion best described by the word "natural?" But I must not exercise my brain too much! It is a bad habit. And I wouldn't for the world allow myself to become analytical or introspective. It's too bad about ducks, though.

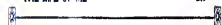
These days I get general orders every time Mother leaves the room. She turns in the doorway, and says with decision, "*Don't touch anything!*" Amusing?

The monotony of existence was delightfully disturbed recently by the visit to Park Hill of an Actress Lady we knew slightly in New York. She came to

I took a fall out of that duck that was beautiful  
in its complacency.







our house to luncheon, and she said the biscuits were "slumshicious." If you know a very lovely Actress Lady who says things are slumshicious, you know who this Actress Lady is. Well, the Nicest Man in Town lunched with us, too, and they all planned to go to the ball of the season which was the following night. Mother was to be the chaperone, but she isn't very old and usually scorns such a position. This time it promised to be different, and while Mother, as a rule is not much keener for Society than Society is for her (which she says is not as keen as it might be), still she and Father sat in a box to see the Actress Lady's play, together with the Nicest Man in Town and the two next Nicest Men in Town, and later they took the Actress Lady to the ball.

Mother was called to the stage door back of the boxes by the Star's maid, and there crouched in a heap on the floor was the Actress Lady in her fascinating fluffy gown of the last act, to say that she would be a real woman in a real gown in five minutes! They waited for the girl on the deserted stage, and

then they all passed out the stage entrance to the carriages in the back street. It was all rather different from the way Mother goes to balls (when she can't get out of them—which isn't often).

When the party came down the great stair-case, there was a half moon of shirt-fronts, three deep, at the bottom, and pretty ladies were parting the palms to peep through at the beautiful, gentle Actress Lady. Then many pleasant people, who ordinarily never had time to stop to speak to us, came up to Mother in flocks, and said they were so glad to know she had come back to live among them, and they were coming to see her so soon. They were then introduced to the Actress Lady, each one, in turn, making exactly the same little remark, with the possible variation of locality.

"You don't remember me, of course," each lady said in shaking hands with the celebrity. "But I met you in Bar Harbor three years ago this last August!"

"Oh—yes," graciously answered the Actress Lady,

in her smooth, low voice, that even the profession-proof Leading Man caught himself thinking had a personal sweetness, now and then, "I remember that August very well, indeed. Bar Harbor is delightful in August, isn't it?"

Then the shirt-fronts crowded up, and shook Mother warmly by the hand—especially those who never could tell for the life of them, whether she was herself, or one of her sisters. And each shirt-front, in turn, said to the Actress Lady, "May I have a dance? You know, I did have a dance with you once—but, of course, you would not remember it! It was at a lawn party in Morristown, given by Mrs—."

"Oh—yes!" the Actress Lady recalled the time, with the dearest sweetest little glance at the shirt-front, "I remember that lawn party, perfectly! Awfully jolly sort of place, Morristown—don't you think so?"

And Mother, who had not had so many men eager to get near her since the time when she carelessly got drowned, had the most deliciously entertaining time she had had since she lost her grip on the humor

of things, in acquiring me. Cousin Martha's former suit-case sympathizers were all there, as was also the stirring dame who had taken such pride in spreading it all over the community, that Martha had invited her to lunch with her in New York, but that she had been obliged to decline, as Martha had shown the astonishing lack of tact of presuming to ask her to lunch at her husband's house—as though she could possibly consider eating under the roof of a grocer! Her fine feeling was especially interesting to Mother, whose quick eye rested at once upon an ornament belonging to Cousin Martha, which this dame had never returned. The dame, however, meant the best in the world—she had told my Mother that she was truly sorry to have been obliged to hurt Cousin Martha, and she wanted us all to know that if Martha had been considerate enough to have asked her to Sherry's or Martin's, she would have gone, no matter how she felt about the grocery business. Nice of her—and we are glad the little ornament she has neglected to return, is so becoming.

The gentleman who kept Mr. Ludlow—a stranger to him—supplied with all of the brilliant local newspaper clippings with red head-lines on his marriage such as "Her New York Club Man turns out to be the Grocery Boy"—he whose regard for his gentlemanhood was so strong that he used his club envelopes—he was there, lending distinction to the function. And he who used to say that the quality of Mother's voice touched places in his soul that nothing else had ever reached—he who this evening asked her flatteringly what it was she used to do that was interesting, paint?—he was there. Well, rather!

And after a while the Nicest Man in Town stood in the doorway of the ballroom, his great coat over his arm and his hat in his hand, looking up at the lovely Actress Lady, as she came gracefully down the stairs with her wrap on. She was saying gentle little things, right and left; like, "I'm sorry we must say good-night so early, but I have a matinee to-morrow! One day we shall meet again, I am sure, and everybody will remember everybody else—and won't it be jolly?"

And to Mother she said she would be sure to write her a note from San Francisco—and that Mother need not fancy that because she was an actress girl, she would forget! “I shall always love Dicklet,” she added.

“And I shall always think of you as you hurried through the darkened theatre, and all those stage people wished you a happy time at the ball!” Mother said to her, in parting.

Perhaps it is well that work-a-day women in vastly different callings, can see the picturesque side of each other's lives. It helps the world go around—a little.

## CHAPTER XVI

FATHER has accepted a position somewhere away on the train-cars. From the fact that it was all very quickly decided, and because on our way to the station to see Father off, he and Mother spoke of trivial things with a great effort at being impersonal, I know they both feel depressed and fear a long separation.

Strange thing about the blues—so many intelligent people have them, there must be something in them.

It was dreadful to come back alone, just Mother and I. I thought for a moment our key would refuse to unlock the front door. I was rocked to sleep, and when anything like this happens in our family, you can count on it, I am needed. I don't think I was rocked for my own pleasure, if you care to know. And the way that "Bye-O Baby Bunting" got sung to me, in jerks, was not at all cheerful.

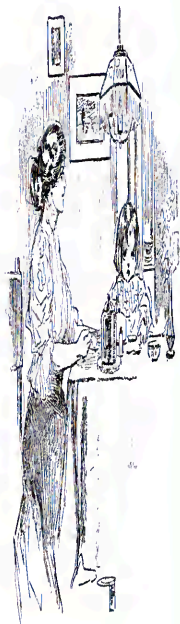
Breakfast was a chokey sort of an affair. The morning seemed very long; the afternoon dragged; and at five o'clock, Mother acquired an attack of nerves and began walking the floor. I took my usual place at the window to watch for the "Daddy-car." It comes from town about five.

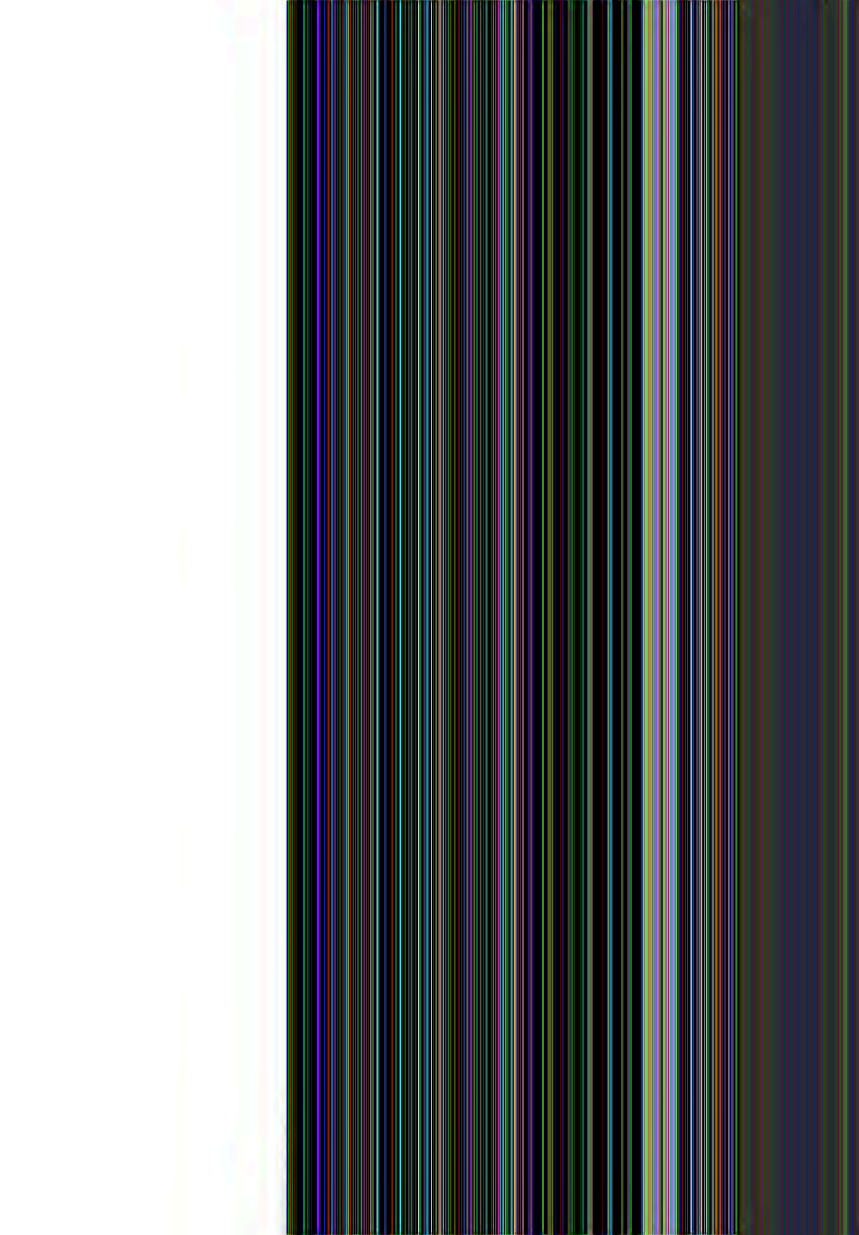
"Couldn't you think of something else to do, besides stand at that window?" demanded Mother, none too considerately.

I could have done something else, no doubt, but I would not. I just stood patiently watching car after car go by, and sinking deeper into that expression that looks the way Mother used to feel—the way she was feeling about now, too. Finally, I was marched up to bed. But at nine o'clock (think of it's being so late!), Mother was still rocking me, and I was doing all I could to be polite and stay awake to show my appreciation of such un-dreamed of courtesy.

After this Mother went down on the porch. She did not eat. Silly. Ladies always take their grievances out on Life by not eating. It does not hurt

Forrest's was a good job of my office.





Life. Most ladies take a little tea and toast in place of their usual dinner, when the man is away. Mother is yet worse. She cannot stand the dining room. We only go in there to dust, and change the water the sweet-peas live in. I am fed punctually, of course. I think I shall call a halt on custard soon. I often look longingly at the lemon pies they grow next door. Coddled egg becomes monotonous, although it has its uses in gumming up the tray of one's high chair, and is fairly good for decorating the fringe of bibs. Otherwise, excuse me! Custard is another form of coddled egg, one which the up-grows fancy a clever deceit. I can't see that it is possible to fool a person of helpless age forever and ever with the same trick. I am looking forward to talking over this point with Mother some day.

My Mother has carefully instructed her Mother upon the class of gifts most acceptable to small persons on their second birthdays. "Give the boy little things," she advised.

Now I have vast numbers of bright, new pennies

and nickels from the Mint; and the good word getting to Aunt Catherine, I have hundreds of tiny glass beads to string; and the idea being passed on to Aunt Beatrice, I have miniature train-cars one inch long; and Aunt Hope not wishing to be unfashionable, has given me a game with many, many wee pegs to be stuck in cardboard holes, but which I prefer to stick in Mother's gloves, or in the bread box. We have to side-step to keep off the beads, we find pegs in the beds, the sand-pile is full of pennies, and the little engine hops down people's backs—with my help.

I think we are going crazy. Mother says this is her last theory on toys, and she hopes the next time it is Christmas, or I am of another year's age, the family will combine and give me one big thing that cannot turn up in the soup unexpectedly—for instance, a mule or a grand piano.

My favorite sentence is, "I want to help my Mummah!" And the other day when the laundress came here with the finger of her glove shockingly ripped at the

tip, I remarked, "All bit—too bad" which I think shows that I am progressing in the art of expressing myself in words. Don't you? Strange, is it not, that when one understands so much, he can say so little?

My Grandfather has a new automobile, which greatly impressed Park Hill this afternoon when he drove out to our place in it, on its first trip. My Grandmother, in the tonneau, looked most got-up and beaming. My boy-uncle exhibited the correct degree of assumed indifference for one feeling so superior to the other High School boys, while the chauffeur was noticeable for being a shade darker than Miss Clara Cummins, and quite as self-appreciative, if not more so. Furthermore, he was a bit too crisp, so to speak, in taking the big car around corners. There was a spirit of cake-walk in his driving, due, possibly, to his great pride in being chosen to take the car out the initial tour, and to teach the new owner how to run it.

Well, they picked us up, and off we all went for a drive—our neighbors not having been so interested

in us since the day we took snapshots of the lovely Actress Lady in our back yard, with me in her arms.

"Don't be nervous, dear," my Grandmother kept saying, reassuringly to Mother. "No harm will come to the blessed boy!" I, Dicklet, am he referred to as "blessed" by my Grandmother. It is a pleasant word—blessed—but there is a tone of fatality in it, especially to the sensitive while automobiling. I closed my hand tightly on the two new nickels that had begged to come with me. They were not delighted at being called "blessed," either, as we shot around curves. They just escaped being poked down a crack in the floor of the front porch, by the arrival of the family and the new machine, and they weren't anxious to get into any more trouble. They clung to me and I to them, and Mother to both of us.

Grandmother made the same little remark she always made when we were out together, a remark to the effect that Mother's hat would be much more becoming if it were bent down at the back. Mother replied, irrelevantly but feelingly, that as Father was

out of town, and I was then pride (and there were no duplicate copies), she did wish we might drive a little more conservatively. It seemed too bad that the public should not have a definite glimpse of us, too—we were so elated, it was a pity not to let the joy be seen by others!

"Pray, don't worry, dear!" Grandmother insisted, (as we dashed out of the Park at the rate of thirty miles a hour, when the regulations were "Automobiles—Notice! Not faster than 8 miles"). "You see, dear," my Grandmother went on, "this Negro is a thoroughly trained chauffeur, and is specially recommended by the man from whom we bought the car. He simply has the love of his race for showing-off. He will slow down, presently. We are hurrying just a little now because Brother has an engagement to take Hope to a concert."

"Well," ventured Mother, "I don't question the darkey's ability as a driver, especially when it comes to making time—but is he anything of a surgeon?"

This remark was probably not particularly bright,

which accounted for the Negro's hat blowing off just at this instant. He turned to look after the hat, it being a very well-worn specimen of cheap felt that might have got dusty. While he was looking, the car dashed rudely up to a telegraph pole to shake hands with it, without first being introduced.

Something blew up like a barrel of dynamite. Somebody yelled "My God!" And besides other things that occurred, Mother's hat at last got bent down at the back.

It was summer and everybody was out on her porch. Later we heard many versions of the accident, but one old lady witness reverently announced that the only reason we were not all killed outright, was because "the Lord did not want us," which statement has more truth in it, doubtless, than the lady imagined; for, while Mother's family love each other much, they love to argue with each other more—there being considerable Kentucky and a little Killarney in them, in spots. It is only to be supposed that the Authorities would think twice before taking so many of us into

Heaven at one sitting. It might disturb the evenness of the present administration.

Mother's first idea, after so unceremoniously changing her seat in Grandfather's new motor, for a more formal one in the gutter on the opposite side of the street, was that her skull was crushed in at the back, as well as her hat. Then floods of horror swept over her—she was afraid to look for me. I was interested to see her who used to wake up hoping she no longer had a baby to complicate her life, now, in maddened intensity, try to force herself to face the possibility of finding this to be true. She did not mind her twisted ankle, nor her bent-at-the-back hat, nor the little stream of blood running down her cheek, nor any of her other dents, but I was worried lest before I found the breath to call to her, the iron buckle would drive itself into her throat, and this would be the end.

I nervously sobbed, just in time. She looked up to see me crawling toward her. I had bounced out like a rubber ball. She grabbed me with such fierce strength she hurt me a lot more than the accident

had. She struggled to the sidewalk with me close to her, where we had excited remarks made into our buzzing ears, and whisky and hair- tonic poured on us and into us, by kind people who had the surprising good manners not to laugh.

My boy-uncle groggily got to his feet and made for the nearest street-car line, to keep his appointment with his sister—it was all he knew until next morning and he never did know where he lit, or what had hit him. Grandfather, whose head had grazed the coping walked like a tipsy sailor to where my Grandmother sat rocking to and fro in a hysterical mass of fine clothes, asphalt chips and blood stains, and he remarked, "One of you women scratched the back of the seat getting out of the machine!" He gets red every time anybody tells this story on him, and he says it is a wicked libel—that he at once inquired for the dead and wounded! Then we all laugh—another reason why they would rather have our family enter Heaven on the installment plan.

Nobody was killed. We went home in the street

car, for which we gave ourselves congratulations. The city did not charge us for knocking the telegraph pole out of plumb. It is quite possible for a Negro to turn pale. Mr. Cake-Walk got his hat back—and he got some other things that were due him. Believe me. They mended the car, but it took them weeks to do it.

We dream of tigers at night, especially if, during the day, we have heard an automobile horn—which sound we do not care for as we once did. We hope that if anyone else has any free rides to give Mother and me, he will bring the milk wagon or some such moderate kind of vehicle, we being a bit shy of non-rail-going buggies. Thank you just the same.

The two nickels arrived home safely in the palm of my hand, but they had the wind pretty well squeezed out of them. I think they will enjoy a quiet rest in our ash pit, if ever I can succeed in throwing them high enough to get in the hole at the top. So thoughtless of up-grown to build ash-pit openings up so far! It is lonely to go out in an automobile without

one's Father. It is yet lonelier to come home without him.

Manufacturers, salesmen and enthusiasts will explain to you, if you are weak enough to permit it, that the "automobile is the conveyance of the future." They caught Grandfather on that phrase. But—(take it from me!)—it is a conveyance to the future, and you'd better look out for it!

## CHAPTER XVII

MY Father makes a ring on every letter to Mother, and writes in it "A kiss for the kid."

I see the postman coming sooner than anyone else, and I run to Mother and get the bit of paper with my kiss on it. I carry this all day, except when I lose it; and at night, having exhausted every other excuse to make my tired Mother climb the stairs again, I cry for my "Daddy-kiss." My Mother, like other little boys' Mothers, cannot refuse this plea. Funny how much one is born knowing! Most every man is born knowing all the weaknesses in the ladies. Just looking pathetic, is one of the most effective proofs of this statement. You might try it yourself, sometime.

I have been ill, and Mother is worn out. First it was hot, then the vegetable man meant to be kind, and gave me a raw carrot—a dainty that Mother

has often seen cab-drivers in Germany indulge in, while sitting on the box with their feet done up in burlap and straw, without any ill results to their inner workings, so far as the Bureau of Vital Statistics knew. But there is something in the highly-strung organism of American persons of helpless age that makes them differ from German cab-drivers. The carrot in my case did not set well. I could feel it shift. Later on I went in to call a few houses up, where two children are kept pretty sick, as a rule, by their mother's native stupidity; and here, "She," as her husband calls her, gave me a basket of green grapes, and encouraged me to eat all I liked—skins, seeds and all. This was too great a strain on the carrot. Certainly, I ought to have had my feet done up in straw when I ate it.

I really cannot say—women are such complicated ones—whether it is because our Doctor is a good physician, or because he has an automobile and refuses to have a speed-mania attachment put in, or just because once when he was in training in New

"A kiss for the kid."





York, he knew Mother's Special Physician, but anyway, we believe in him. It did not take our Doctor long to get to us and somehow, we felt happier, ill, with our Doctor headed for our house, than we would have felt, well, with no excuse to see him. We hope he will never find it out.

The new Doctor makes me well quickly. Besides, I get some pleasure out of a slow drive around the block in his machine. He drives right-side up—a great relief. We never worry about raw carrots and green grapes when he is in town, we only worry about the neighbors. If I were "She," I would be more careful how I walked out, unprotected, near Mother. As for the vegetable man—well, we have changed vegetable men!

Aunt Catherine came up here from the Springs and took me home with her. As the train pulled out, I put my face close to the car window, and searched the crowd at the station for my Mother. I looked hunted. I suppose I might have spared my Mother this, when I knew how much she needed a few nights'

sleep, after her hard week with me. But no. There is a streak of brute in babies. There is something satisfied in me when my Mother goes back to that still house, and buries her face in my empty clothes, and is un-crying—something satisfied in this, that otherwise would be left wondering. Men-beings should always remember to look a little tragic when leaving the ladies that are near to them, especially when leaving them in overwhelming desolation, and when going away for a good time, themselves.

Having supplied the left-behind-ones with sufficient suggestion for the misery they delight in, men-beings should at once smile. This I did before the train was out of the yards. I shall see the lady of the cookies. I shall look for that delightful empty bone and fill it with gravel from Aunt Catherine's walk. I shall pester the cat with sincere hugs. I shall kiss enough of the lady callers to make them want to come in to tea often. I will make Aunt Catherine wish she had a little boy, while I am with her; and see that she is glad she hasn't, when I leave.

And as for Mother—well, she can sit, as usual, on the porch, and watch the summer evenings turn blue, until the great mountains and the night grow into one darkness. If she likes, Mother can think of Father's touching little remarks about his room at his hotel in Montana being so wretched he can't bear to go there until two o'clock or so in the morning. She can amuse herself thinking of Father at two o'clock in the morning, or before two o'clock—just whichever she thinks she can get the more worry out of.

Most women are waiting. It is a waiting job to be a woman. Very sorry, if they don't always like it, but it is so. Women try sometimes to change things, but they end up—waiting. A woman who has postponed her waiting by a little play-acting at living in the world with her own life, finds pain in her soul, where otherwise there would have been only—vacancy—perhaps. This is what I think, although I can see that thinking may be out of my line. If my Mother had never tried to sing with her voice, she

might have sung in living a joyous life, dealing with raw carrots and me; she might have seen the humor in never staying in any one place long enough to get a gas stove paid for, before boxing up and following fate.

Eventually I was brought home, and Aunt Catherine, very handsome in an early autumn suit and becoming hat, looked at Mother with sisterly feeling and said, "Dear girl, I can't say how sorry I am for you, living here by yourself all these months with only this child!"

And Mother replied, also with sisterly feeling, "Well, dear girl, when I am a well-preserved, middle-aged woman, on my way to see my son graduated from Harvard, and you are still as you are now, I shall be sorry for you!"

This, and other little things tended to make me see that I was welcomed home.

I like to drive with Grandfather, although he is the sort of chauffeur who miraculously saves one's life four or five times each voyage. We often drive out onto the prairie, and Grand-dad takes us very

near all possible danger, such as wash-outs and irrigation ditches, and lets his machine quiver, while he points off to the horizon, and says, "See that splendid property? Well, some day, we shall see a pretty suburb there, with schools, and churches and stores. If people had any sense, they would buy up this property and hold it a little while."

Mother, who always sees the horrible possibilities in things, nervously inquires of Grand-dad whereabouts he thinks they will lay out the cemetery. But I am growing used to Grandfather's driving, and personally, I think he will save us from violent death just as long as he can—and still drive where he pleases. And anything is better than staying at home all the time. Mother says she never did belong to that class of society that dresses up its youngsters and spends the Fourth out with the populace.

All ladies should be non-thinking. It would be easier then to wait.

Babies grow up—if one gives them time.

We are going to move again. Packers are coming

to box up things. We are going to the far-away place on the train-cars where Daddy is. We have lived here, and Daddy there, until it is proved that Daddy's position is permanent and satisfactory. Having decided it is all for the best, we are disposing of our present gas stove for a sufficient amount to make the last payment, and are headed for a new gas stove and some more of Life's detail.

With all the crating going on about this place, I have marked fears that they will over-look packing up the sand-pile.

Our physician glanced over the wreck of our lovely little home to-day, and remarked that it was a great regret to him to see the little brown house on the prairie dismantled; he had grown fond of it. Seems to me he had little to do to make it any harder to go away. Physicians are a strange lot, they have much talent for making their patients remember them. 1190 is the number of our Doctor's automobile, and there are other pleasant things about him that don't come to me at the moment. If a lady must miss her

*Our physician closed over the wreck of our lovely little home to-day.*





physician, I should say it is better for her to miss two of them, than just one. We are now missing two, one with an automobile, and one without. No physician ever got an umbrella out of us, however, but it is not because we did not long to give it to him.

Whenever Life crowds too heavily upon my Mother, she wants a piano. She has not had a piano for years. There must be a reason. My Mother has had everything she has needed—except a piano. This is fate. My Mother is superstitious, and believes that it is because when she had the opportunity given her to learn to play the piano, she used to sit and dream. She cannot play. She has told me that living for months without Father would not have been so hard, if we had had a piano. I can't see why.

My Mother says there is no rest in being somebody's mother, but personally, I fancy there is just as much as there is in being somebody's son! Don't think for a moment it does not require considerable effort to hold my position! Sudden dismissal constantly threatens me, if I don't stop saying, "Mummah."

"Say *Mother*, Dicklet!" my Mother sternly insists. "Do that much for me, I beg of you! You are no longer a baby. Why, you are over two years old—quite old enough to treat me with proper dignity."

I would not flatter any woman by bending too quickly to her will, and when we have these little times of correction, I just smile, and remark, "Mine likes to say *Mumamah!*"

To-day I studied my Mother and lisped, "Blue eyes!" She looked as happy as the sun coming out after a rain, so I spoiled the effect of my tenderness by continuing, "Mine wishes Mine could git 'em out, an' play wif 'em!"

I don't know whether my Mother is pretty, or not, but I think not. Her nose is awfully long, and frequently gets in my eye when she kisses me. My eyes are brown, and my nose is not old enough to get in anybody's way. Rather glad. Cats' noses are part of their faces. I tried to show the cat how to wipe her nose yesterday. P. S. I did not succeed.

We broke a glass, and I got little gas-pipe trenches dug in myself by the cat's finger nails. So rude. It is very hard to teach cats things.

My! But a torn up house is dismal! Why, it is so wretched here that Mother forgot herself and rocked me to-night, sitting on a box of books. She sang about "Daddy's gone a-hunting." It is not so very easy to be the Father of one. The Father has to make money, and there are so many men who might get there first, it must be difficult.

I think these facts were heavy in my Mother as she rocked me on the packing-case. Also, while singing this old tune, she was thinking. In her mind there was a sort of home-made comedy going on, with just one actor—a kind of dream-person called "Lullabye." From my sleepy glimpses into her thinking, I should judge that a Lullabye is a spirit which takes form at times in a song. Mother's mind says a Lullabye is a song usually written by a man who would throw a book at the first child that interrupted him while doing it—a song sung by a lady to up-grown persons

in a drawing room, while her model, modern baby is put to bed by a nurse in a dark room, as he should be.

My Mother, herself, used to sing Lullabies, paying much attention to her breathing, voice production and phrasing. She never knew any Lullabye without her music, and she never could play her own accompaniments. To-night she was wondering what was the real idea of a Lullabye. Certainly women do not put years of work and much money into music for the purpose of singing to their own children. Even I can see this. I think they must do it so they can say self-consciously, when asked to sing, "Well, it is rather soon after dinner, isn't it? And I am horribly out of practice, but, if you like, I will try a little Lullabye."

Then somebody comes to the surface, pleasantly, and remarks, that the singer has an exquisite voice and a great future. And the "future" of a great many Lullabye-singing women is sitting on a case of books, humming "Bye-O Baby Bunting, Daddy's

gone a-hunting, to get a rabbit's skin to wrap his baby up in!" This Lullabye is a real Lullabye, seldom sung in a drawing room, being too actual in its story to be merely an amusement. It is good for going-to-sleep purposes though, as it is monotonous, and can be sung immediately after dinner, with or without a piano accompaniment, by a voice in or out of condition. We have quite a library of Lullabyes—they are kept in a case up stairs, now that no piano lives with my Mother, while "Baby Bunting" is always ready to sing itself to me.

"Sing it again?" I pleaded.

"Very well, son," she said, sadly. "I am glad you like it—it is the only one I know that I never saw on a printed page."

I hope Daddy has the rabbit skin. I'd rather have it than my Russian blouses, or even my overhauls.

We are going on the train-cars to-morrow to a new home.

## CHAPTER XVIII

THE Mothers of men would be rich if they got one dollar, or thereabouts, for each time they said, "Don't hold the screen door open, dear—it lets the flies in!"

Habit is strong in Mothers. The idea of constant correction lives in them when unnecessary. In other words, Mothers do not take vacations when vacations offer themselves. My Mother got off her screen-door remarks to-day, when there was not a thing in the little brown house for a fly to sit on—not even a packing case or a bit of trash, for everything was left empty and tidy and clean; and besides, it is November, and for days we, like the flies, have been frozen solid most of the time. I should think one's Mother might allow him to hold the screen door open on Christmas and in other non-fly seasons, without spoiling his enthusiasm in wrong doing. One's Mother doesn't, however.

It is quite thrilling to feel a train moving with you aboard, headed for your Daddy. It is so absorbing that your eyes grow dreamy, and the collection of waving relatives on the station platform, naturally jump at the conclusion that the expression is caused by parting with them. It isn't. Little children do not mean to be cruel, but the meanest sort of train-car can beat any weeping grandparent on earth for holding one's attention. Sorry. It seems to have been so for many generations. I don't know what little boys liked better than grandparents before there were train-cars. But once a train-car beat out Miss Clara Cummins, which ought to prove to you the truth of my statement that a train is fascinating.

I am sorry about Grand-dad's automobile, I am sorry about the sand-pile, I am sorry about the little brown house on the prairie, I am sorry about 1190, I am sorry my Mother is too tired to cry, I am sorry one's relatives grow so attached to one that they have dull pains in their hearts, but I must say I like to be going somewhere once in a while!

Between us and Father, there seem to be great wastes of unimproved property, with prairie-dogs always popping out of holes and barking at the engine. Nyl but the world is big! I got a tiny, tiny glass of water in the dining car. A big black man gave it to me. Mother smiled as she discovered it was a whiskey glass. I like black men, for you will notice that black men like little children. Miss Cummins was black.

On the train Mother and I had a game. She would start it by saying "I say *Mother*, not *Mummah*!"

"Mine says *Mummah*!" I would reply, looking at her just as humorously as she looked at me.

In this manner we passed endless anti-hills and real hills, cowboys and lonesome looking ranches, far apart. It is nice to have a steady joke with one's Mother—one of those easily understood jokes that adds interest unto itself with every repetition, and which is no particular tax on the intellect. I would not call her Mother for the world. It would mean too much to her. If I did this, she might kiss me in public, or there might be tears of gratitude in her eyes

for my having allowed her to suffer so much for me! I think too much of her to spoil her fun in imagining that a baby is not worth while. She might be just unstrung enough to fancy herself repaid for some of her sleepless nights or something, if I ever called her Mother. You won't catch me taking any careless chances with gratitude—I'm no physician! Mummah is a very good name, I think, for a lady who has set herself dead against joy. Don't you?

I think I understand women a little, but, naturally I would think so, being a man-being. Women economize too much, which is the result of their making money, by saving it. Women have to count the cost, which often mars the pleasure of possessing things. The cost of joy is great—so heavy, in fact, that most women can feel only the awful price. Very sorry. It has been so forever, almost.

I was entertained to-day by a nice, fat old gentleman, who leaned forward into our section, and said in a friendly way to Mother, "What are you going to make of this little boy, when he grows up, madam?"

Now you would suppose, wouldn't you, that this question would require some deliberation? But no, not at all! Mother glanced up from her magazine, and answered, quick as a flash, "I am going to make a success of him, sir."

It fairly took my breath away. I see clearly what lies ahead of me! It begins to dawn upon me, why, ever since I was a youngish person of eighteen months' age, I have been expected to keep my toys in their proper place, and why I am not allowed to tear up books. If my Mother has this alarming idea in her head, why, I shall not be allowed to day-dream, as she has day-dreamed!

A success of me? Eh? Horrible! I was hoping she would say she would make a Pullman conductor of me, if I were good!

The nice, fat old gentleman dropped into one of our seats, as you might know he would have to do after such a statement, "And how will you make a success of him, madam?" he continued, smiling over the top of his glasses.

"I will teach him, so far as I am able, the qualities that tend toward success. And if my own influence falls short of the mark, I will bring to bear other influences along the same lines."

Possibly you think I was not surprised!

The old man was a stranger to us, and had made a casual remark in passing, but he evidently had struck a serious chord, and it amused him quite as much as anything else would have done.

Mother says she thinks about all there is to Life is to be entertained, so she instantly detected the old man's wish to be diverted. And whether she meant all she said, or not, she was ready to help him kill half an hour—and he was a nice, Santa Claus sort of person, I'll say that for him. I stopped trying to extricate the eye of my Teddy Bear, and began to take notes, while sitting in the aisle, in everybody's way—my favorite position, always.

"Well," began the old man, readjusting his glasses, "this is most interesting! Are you going to make a lawyer, a doctor, a soldier or a merchant of the boy?"

"I shall leave the choice of a calling to the boy himself," she replied.

"Oh?" he asked, amused. "So all you volunteer to do, is to make a success of him, is it?"

"And isn't that enough?" she asked.

"Why are you so bent on his being a success?" he went on.

"Because I have always been a failure," my Mother answered.

"Are you sure?" he probed.

"Absolutely."

But my Mother smiled at the delicate flattery in the old man's accent. Ladies always smile at flattery. P. S. Also men. Still once yet—and babies, too!

They had quite a talk, but I did not follow it closely, I was too much engaged in thinking. It had occurred to me ere this, that if I dared to stand before my Mother, good-for-nothing, she would, with her own hands, take that iron buckle from her own throat and put it on mine. Furthermore, my Mother would press it in.

Being my Father's son, and in consequence a gentleman, I would not raise my hand against what she honestly believed to be right. Perhaps things would have been less complex for me, if my Mother had not failed at singing printed Lullabies? It would seem to the average intelligence, as though no reproduction of my parents' bad qualities is to be tolerated in me. It is enough to turn one white! It would seem fairer, rather, that the failings presented to one by inheritance, should be coddled because they have been in the family so long that everyone has grown fond of them. No day-dreaming, eh? Work—that is what is ahead of me!

Ha! I have to smile. I have often wondered what lay in the one little sentence that Mother's Special Physician spoke—that one about "a naturally good mentality allowing itself to become a hypochondriac." I see now what was in it, besides words. Power was in it. Or was it bluff? And what is the difference between power and bluff, if the result is the same thing? And there is something in my

Mother's simple statement that she is going to make a success of me, that makes me nervous. There is more in this than words. You would appreciate this, if you ever saw my Mother check my tendency to howl when I fall down and get denied.

Oh, well! I suppose thoroughness is one of the qualities that must be developed in anyone who is destined to be a success, so I stopped worrying, and went back to work on my Teddy Bear's eye. I think I can get it loose, in time.

Mother says that a woman's particular vocation in Life, is flattering men into thinking they amount to something. Now persons of helpless age, like the ladies, are not supposed to have any idea of logic, but let me remark, please, that if my life is to be tagged by my Mother's flattery, I might as well begin right now to enjoy my prosperity!

I have heard it said, with sadness by those who know, that there is quite a wait, as a rule, between the beginning of a career, and the first casual gasp of recognition—"How interesting!" Some of the world's

most earnest and gifted workers never hear the little remark until they are so old they have to catch it through an ear-trumpet. I should judge I have already made the right start—and my reward, “How interesting!” is sure to come, because I caught my Mother saying to herself, “Is there just a possibility that I would have greater strength to handle this child, if I went to work at this late day, and actually accomplished the things I have always failed in doing?”

Heavens! I wonder if she is going to take up scales at thirty? If she ever does turn back and carry out her resolutions, well, what way out of success is there left for me?

My Mother has nerves. She is very modern. If you don't believe me, put sugar on your meat sometime, and observe the expression on her face when she sees to what degrading depths you have sunk. Personally, I like sugar on my meat. I tried it in the dining car this evening—but not for long. Dear Mother! She says a woman ought to be an idea, or

a dream or a memory—never a contrivance for bringing up little boys! Considering how badly she feels about it all, I think she is doing fairly well with me, however. You would have thought so yourself, I am sure, had you seen the porter carrying out the sweetened meat. Butter on grapes is no more popular—I have tried that, too.

The only crusts I like, are those that grow on chocolate cake. Other crusts I do not eat, because I save them for my Mother.

I think I know what ails my Mother. She has an "artistic temperament." P. S. This is a pretty bad disease when it gets a good start, but it isn't catching, and I doubt its ever breaking out in me. Mother doesn't take it so awfully seriously in herself, but it would be no laughing matter for me to affect it! Not muchy! Sugar on meat is worse for artistic temperaments than it is for nerves, and it is bad enough for nerves. The taste of it is a matter of opinion. People cannot always agree, even though relatives and loving. Why should they?

## CHAPTER XIX

QUITE as we had anticipated, we arrived at last. Daddy seemed strange after all the months we had been apart, but his pride was warming. I haven't seen anyone look so happy since the day Father leaned over my tiny white iron hospital crib, sometime ago—why, dear me! It must have been two years ago! We were oh! so glad to see each other—all of us.

In the carriage, Father turned to Mother with concern and said, "This is a Godforsaken place I have brought you to, dear, just an over grown mining camp. I have hoped all along it would not be necessary to live here, but—"

"This place with you, is better than Park Hill without you," Mother reassured him. And I think so, myself, though I can't help wishing we had brought the sand-pile.

It is a dreary looking place, indeed. There are no trees—nothing grows here but people and enterprises. It is a mining camp that has turned itself into a town, giving an appearance of gawkiness, something like a half-grown boy with clothes that are too small for him. Cows wander about, nibbling at tin cans. The place is full of tin cans, and “dumps” and shaft-houses and whistles and sort of run-down looking little cottages. Oh yes! And saloons.

“You will find the people charming,” Father ventured, on our first walk.

“They would have to be—if there were anything charming here,” Mother replied, a little discouraged, I thought.

“There is a store that isn’t so bad,” Father hesitated, with something in his tone that indicated he had already grown to like the town enough to be sensitive to any criticism of it.

“One can get a gas stove—I suppose?”

“Dear girl!” Father said, “we have had about

enough of struggling, haven't we? But it will be different here. We certainly can get a gas stove!"

We walked on, up a steep hill, and saw all sorts of industries, like flat-cars full of timbers for the mines, and men going to work with their dinner buckets in their hands. At last Mother spoke.

"One would almost have to have a piano here," she said. Then her mind travelled back to the time when she and Aunt Catherine were students together, and Aunt Catherine broke Mother's best tea-pot, and expressed her regret thus: "Why worry, Sis? The world is full of tea-pots. All you have to do, is to get in line with them!" Mother was two years "getting in line" with another good tea-pot, but she has often applied Aunt Catherine's philosophy. Now she looked up at Father, before he had time to say anything comforting, and she argued, cheerfully, "I suppose the world is full of pianos, and all we have to do is to get in line with them, isn't it?"

"That's all, dear," replied Father, with a smile.

"It is something to do, to get in line with the things

that tend toward happiness and satisfaction, isn't it?" thoughtfully suggested Mother.

"It can be done—even in a Montana mining camp," Father said.

We have taken a funny place to live in. We have two dark rooms in a good looking building, for which we give twice the rent we did for the Park Hill house. Out of our back window, we see an alley—a mining camp alley, which is, if possible, a shade less aesthetic than other alleys; and from our side windows, we see brick walls, with window sills decorated by other people's lard pails and milk bottles. We have a "kitchenette," in which there is a cubbyhole-ette, through which groceries are supposed to be shoved, and lean janitors wriggle, when you go out without your key.

Besides the cubbyhole-ette, we have a gas stove-ette, a table-ette, and an icebox-ette that will hold as much as four egglets and a pound of butter. Mother is afraid that one day I will play with the icebox-ette and mislay it. In truth we shall never get into

anything smaller than our kitchenette, until we are laid into a coffin-ette. And hot? Don't mention it!

They have some nicer rooms in the building, but other people got into them first. Places to live in in mining camps are difficult to get, you see, because the town is always so very full-up with people who regret having to live there. We are having our troubles stowing away our belongings. Father says he sees no way to fit us into two rooms and a kitchenette, except by giving up business and sitting and holding the superfluous things. Mother hunted up the manager of the building and asked for the key of the store room belonging to our apartment.

"The store room?" the manager asked, in a puzzled way. "Why, madam, there are no individual store rooms in the building. We did not count on there being any demand for them when constructing the block."

"Really?" said Mother politely. "Well, then, no doubt we can use the main store room? Where is that?"

"The main store room?" queried the manager. "Why, there is no main store room! We supposed when the building was planned, that the tenants would prefer keeping their possessions in their own flats."

Later on Mother went down to the office with a wringer in her hand. "May I trouble you once more?" she ventured, civilly, keeping her eye on me the while. "Where is the laundry? I simply cannot do anything further toward getting settled until I get this obstruction out from under foot. Moving is fearfully trying, isn't it?"

"The laundry?" the manager repeated, vaguely. "Why, let me see—we have in camp the Troy Laundry, the French Hand Laundry, the C. O. D. Laundry, the—"

"Yes, yes," Mother interrupted, "but I mean the washing room here—our private laundry, you see."

"Oh!" A light broke in upon the manager. "There isn't any laundry here, madam. In the

beginning, it never occurred to us that the tenants would care to be bothered with their own washing and ironing. We have made no provision for such things."

"I see," Mother replied, weakly, holding the winger in one hand, and keeping a tight grip on me with the other. "But what do your tenants do about their laundry work?"

"I can't say, I am sure."

"Well, we will take the elevator back with our laundry implements," Mother smiled.

"I am afraid you will have to walk up to-day," the manager told her. "The building is new and we are having some trouble with the automatic elevator at present. But we have sent to Denver for the necessary things to repair it, and it will be running soon!"

There is one thing about this camp I imagine we might as well realize one time as another, and that is, we'd best take it as it is, without a struggle. It is a very self-satisfied place, and if you remark

upon any of the extraordinary ways of doing things, or the princely price of ice (which is one of the few things that grows naturally here), all you get is a patronizing, "Well, you see the conditions are very different here from what they are in most places!"

If we put the wringer on the gas stove, it might bend the stove, it is such a frail stove and such a healthy wringer. The wringer will not look well hung above any of our oils. The problem is serious. Maybe if we get a China-boy to wash for us, he will accept the wringer as a gift. Also the wash-board, also the clothes pins, also the irons, also the ironing-board, also the boiler. In the meantime, the laundry implements may sleep with me, if they like. I am used to having my little cold iron train-cars at the pit of my stomach, and my cement blocks tucked under my cheek.

Father came in from the office to-day and found us considerably black-and-blued from trying to circulate around our rooms. We were somewhat discouraged concerning the disposition of three barrels

of china, four trunks of clothes, a center table weeping under its load of books, pictures stacked three deep all around the room, to say nothing of five Teddy Bears and cooking utensils.

Mother looked up pleasantly and said, "Do you know, Richard, there is one thing I am sure I am going to like about this place?"

"Good! What is it, dear?"

"There is no one here who is apt to insult me about Martha's having married whom she pleased and when she wished!"

"Life has its compensations, after all!" decided Father.

If we ever had any idea of having a piano in this apartment, we might as well face the fact that it would be quite as easy to have this apartment in a piano. As it is, the place looks like the back room of a Fourth Avenue antique dealer's in New York. And Father says all we need to complete the effect, is a price mark on the bits of *brickly-bran* that are clinging on the narrow plate-rail.

We have almost as many neighbors as belongings. Each neighbor has a sewing machine, a piano or other instrument of disturbance, and a baby. Some of them have more than one baby. Our mining camp home is as modern in its disadvantages as any kitchenette apartment in New York City, built on precious ground, leased for a period of ninety-nine years, for a sufficient sum to admit of the daughters of the owner marrying into the British aristocracy. And plain ground to build comfortable houses on out here, is another thing that grows freely, too.

We are going to have a party. I heard Mother say that the guests were to be given a new game to play in place of bridge. She is going to ask the ladies to come at the dinner hour, when all of the wooden shutters are open from the kitchenettes, and the gases and odors which would explode the galleys if kept in, are let out into the main halls. She is going to give the correct guesser of the number of smells between the front entrance

and our apartment, a prize. The prize will be the winger.

A second prize, consisting of two and a half barrels of china and junk, and all of the books and some of the pictures, will be awarded the lady who guesses the exact number of noises that interfere with the conversation.

A consolation prize of all the uneasy *bricky-bran* that always quivers lest the ship is going to roll the other way, will be presented to the lady who makes the nearest guess as to the number of times the automatic elevator will move out of five tries.

Assorted souvenirs, consisting of the miscellaneous things we constantly stumble over, will be distributed among those not winning a prize, so that there will be no hurt feelings.

Lastly, to her who succeeds in getting into the bath room, and out again, without a burn from the steam pipes, a "well appointed repast will be dispensed."

After the party, I think we shall be less wretched, yet it does seem cruel to live where glorious moun-

tains are to be seen, and still gaze out upon other people's milk bottles.

If we stay here, the janitor (if he stays here) will be getting Father's high hat. We really need rubbers, but unless we wear them to bed, I don't know where we could keep them. Perhaps it is just as well we did not bring the sand-pile, after all. The Fire Ordinance might have objected to any further clogging of the way out.

## CHAPTER XX

**I**F you shove a jar of preserves off the ledge outside a window, and it goes four stories down onto an asphalt-paved area, it will not only spill the preserves, but will probably smash the jar. Also, a silver cup accidentally dropped from the same window onto the same landing, will get a dent in it. (The same result will be noticeable if you drop the cup on purpose). I know these things, because to-day I made my own experiments.

I am improving every opportunity to speak English better. I came to the breakfast table this morning with one of my Father's collars on my head, announcing that I was a king; and to show that I appreciated the full meaning of the crown, I said to them, impressively, "Mine is not going to eat any more aiggs!"

I am fond of the same old answers the up-grownns give to those of us who are yet small. I often nag

my Mother on some familiar subject, just to see if it is possible she has anything new to say in reply. To-day when she was busy I began one of my favorite chants, "Mine wants candy, candy, candy! Mine does want candy, candy, candy—candy!"

No answer at all. I repeated the chant dozens of times, until at last the veins stood out on my Mother's forehead. She tried not to notice me, so I began to whine. This she refused to hear, so I began to cry. But had her heart stopped beating, then and there, she would not have softened sufficiently to regard my demand seriously. She has a theory that if she lets me alone long enough, I will grow tired of the sound of my own voice. But she reckons without my ego. I adore the sound of my own voice!

When I felt she was quivering and about to scream, or jump out after the preserves, I smiled my heavenliest smile, and said, "Mumma, say—No, sonny, I fwaid not to-day!"

I wonder if it ever has occurred to up-grows that Life for little children has its dull spots? Why should

it be taken for granted that we are always amused? Indeed! The Mother of one is more apt to be un-playing, than not. Not knowing how to play herself, she does not teach us how to play. We are supposed to be born knowing how to play, but we are not. The things that Mother teaches me are the things not-to-do.

Sometimes I amuse myself. I bury my head in sofa cushions and announce that I am lost. I direct the search of me, telling them to look in the kitchenette. There is a quaint stupidity in the up-grows—they often touch my bare knees when getting down to look under the couch, but they seldom see me until I tell them where I am.

It has been Christmas again. My Mother was hurt because I preferred the picture of a train-car on the box which contained handkerchiefs, to the handkerchiefs themselves. Of course. What do you suppose? She did not buy the handkerchiefs to please me, did she? She bought them, hoping I would now let her fine ones alone. It was a silly

hope. Most hope is silly. The picture was nice, though.

I have had a professional hair-cut, too. I look neat, but unnatural, and we haven't found any antidote yet that will kill the perfume they put on my head. Soap won't phase it. Time may. I wonder how that wild-boar-sticking janitor is—he who undertook to cut my hair in Park Hill? I wager he knew what happened to "Sport." Don't you?

At my age, Life has great responsibilities. Honor compels me to step on every coal-hole and gas-trap in Camp. All horse-blocks must be climbed, steps and copings walked upon, hitching-posts poked in the ribs, and all fences touched. I have set a fashion, too.

They have put a harness on me, with bells on the breast-band, and I can't run away from the frozen parent driving me. Many people looked after me at first, and those who did not say, "Look at those rosy cheeks!" said, "Say, Mamie, ain't that a good idea?" And before you would have thought of such a thing,

there were a lot of youngsters being taken out on straps or in harness.

I fancy we must be a distinguished family. Father once had a cocktail named after him, which you can still get at the Casino in Central Park, by asking for it by his name. Mother once started to be a singer, worked five years, and got as far as the start. And I, their son, have set a fashion!

Father says that if what I do that is wrong, does not hurt me, he will. All I have to say is, he needn't worry. What I do generally gets in ahead of him in the matter of punishment. I threw an empty vanilla bottle into a group of cuddling cups and saucers on a shelf in the kitchenette, to-day, and a piece of the broken dishes flew rudely back at me and hit my nose. I only threw the bottle because Mother called out to me, "What are you doing out there, dear—something naughty?" I was not doing anything at all at the moment, but I argued that if she would be any better pleased by having her expectations fulfilled, I would do what I could for her.

Remarkable, isn't it, that when smashing one cup and one saucer out of a lot of dishes, one never, by any possible chance, breaks the cup and the saucer that belong together? He ruins the cup of one pair of twins, and the saucer of another, thus rendering useless the whole lot. Who planned Life, I wonder, and if so, why? And it is strange to observe how little a cook can do with two ounces of vanilla, and how much a baby can do with a two-ounce vanilla bottle! Again, if it isn't asking too much—why?

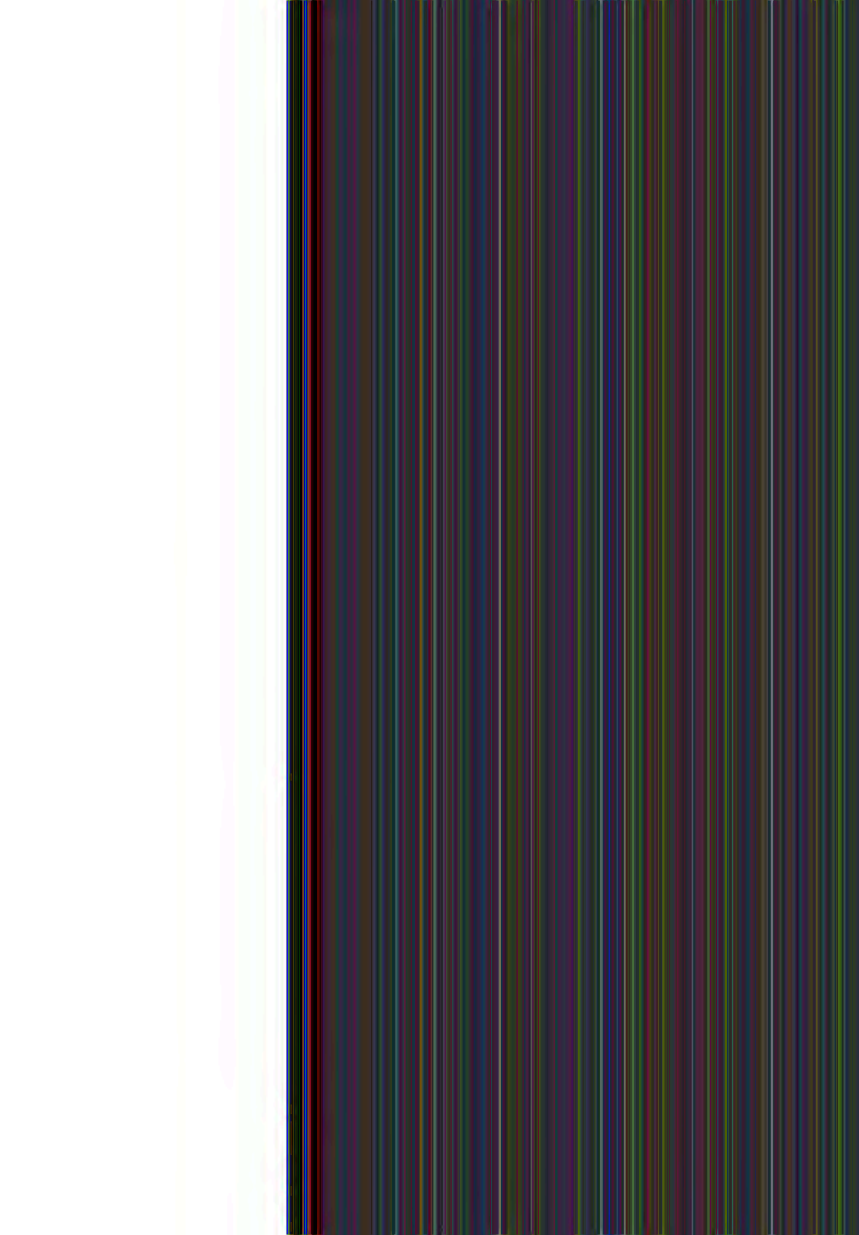
I have to piggy my toes every night, and it takes a long time, especially if there is any hurry to get me to bed. "Son!" this often comes from Father, "haven't you finished with those little pigs yet? That big toe has been sent to market seventy-five times at least!"

"Bye-bye, Daddy," I reply with sweetness of manner, "ist you wait!"

My, but ladies are un-difficult! All you have to do to succeed with them is to know the *how*. If you

So, the other ones are further away from finding out those little things.





humbly ask them to do what you want them to, they will invariably say no. To illustrate: To-day I marched up to my Mother with some nuts in my hand (persons with comparatively new digestive apparatuses, are not supposed to be fed nuts), and instead of whimpering for them, I looked my Mother in the eye, like a man, and said, "Ope them, wíl you please? Mine will chew them well!" Believe me—with the ladies, assume a victory and you have it won! P. S. It is all silly bosh about what nuts will do to you.

Dear oh dear! This having to fumble for the commonest words is positively wearing! This afternoon, while Mother was trying to un-snarl herself in the kitchenette (having attempted to squeeze in between the stove-ette and the table-ette to straighten up the stove-pipe-ette, and inadvertently become stuck), I was flirting with the persons belonging to the opposite milk bottles.

"How old are you, little boy?" they called across the court.

I hung my head and blushed. I knew what they meant, but I had no words. I did not forget, however, the disadvantage of my position, and I listened to all that was said of me, hoping to gain the knowledge that I needed in regard to myself. One day, in the public hall, about a week after my embarrassment, I heard my Mother tell a neighbor my age. I could hardly wait for her to unlock the door to our apartment, I was so eager to set myself right with the new friends across the way.

"Girls!" I called to them, beating upon our glass. "Girls, come to de win'ow! Mine can say it now, Mine can say it now! Dicky Carr is two-and-er-half!"

It will bring a smile when you grow down into a little boy, if you swagger through the sitting room and glance at your Mother severely and say, "Be carehul of dat book, Mummah!" If this does not work, then await your opportunity, and in imitation of the up-grown methods, turn upon your Mother and remark with infinite wisdom, "Mine 'vises you not ter monkey wif de tea-kettle—it's hot!"

I see that what I have feared, has come to pass. We can't stand this apartment any more. There isn't any place for me to play but the fire escape four flights up, which is so full of places to fall-off-of, that we are frantic with apprehension. Even with the young girl to take me out, we can't live here.

I never had the slightest respect for Fredricka. She is so tame-catty that I often sit down in my harness, right in the Principal Street, and when she tries to drag me to my feet, I slip through her hold like a sack of meal without a sack. Certainly. Nowadays, when we come in, Mother greets us with, "How did Dicklet behave to-day, Fredricka?"

"Well," she drawls, a general air of exhaustion being wrappd about her, "pretty good. He didn't sit down on me more'n five or six times."

I never sat on her at all. I sat on a coal-hole. This will show how much sense some people have!

Policemen are nice—they wink at you when you pass. I have also a large nudging acquaintance among the newsboys. And cab-drivers are jolly, too.

They say things to me like, "Whoa, Emma!" when I come down the hill on a dead run, with Fredricka, looking like a thin pain with its hat on crooked, hanging onto the lines. I like to run Fredricka all over this Camp. It amuses the camp, and is good exercise for Fredricka, who, by the way, says her health's giving out, and she thinks she will look for another place. Glad of it, personally. I can "buffalo" Fredricka, but it is harder to "buffalo" Mother. *To buffalo* is a Western verb, and a good one, although the same thing goes on all over the world, under different names. In Boston they would probably say that I "took advantage" of Fredricka. It's the same game everywhere.

Well, we are moving into another apartment, where we see tall mountains, instead of other people's milk bottles. We have to heat the house with stoves, because this is the way they used to heat the cabins, when the camp first started. What was good enough for the pioneers, is considered good enough for the followers-on. It is stoves—or the kitchenette building

There also a day, riding, searching, and the road.





we are leaving, and this block is so modern that you have to spend too much time in the automatic elevator between floors. One might as well carry coal. You have your choice of steam heat and milk bottles, or stoves and mountains. If you don't care for either combination, you don't have to stay—nobody asked you to come in the first place.

The new home has a yard, wherein I shall be expected to play. O trusting up-grown! Wouldn't you suppose they would realize that I have already resolved to cut the yard, and play on the car-track? This, of course, when I am not hanging over the balcony railing, just about to drop on my head.

Our furniture got very rough usage coming five blocks, more damage, in fact, was done to it, than has been done in shipping it all over the United States. When Mother spoke to the "boss" about his placing a bedspring where the corner wore a hole in the top of my great-grandmother's desk, he smiled the camp smile, and said, patronizingly, "Say, lady, what do you expect in a place like this, anyway?"

This here way, is the way we always does things, and if you don't like the idea of goods rubbing against each other, why to thunder did you pack away your bed-cloz? We most generally uses 'em for padding, when folks is extra particular!"

The stove-ette was tied down in the kitchenette we left, being the property of the building, so we have now paid an old five dollar bill on a new gas stove for this apartment. The clerk at the Gas Company's office asked Mother what model she wanted, and she replied that the model was immaterial to her—the finish was always the same. She was being funny, or pathetic, or something—but the gas man did not know it.

The strain of the long winter months in those dark rooms, has been bad for Mother, and she has the nerves once more. She does not sleep, and to hear me making unnecessary noises nearly drives her mad. Naturally, I won't play in the yard. When I grow tired of the house, I whine. I like to write letters to my Grandmother on the painted floors with a tack,

There was none but a hardy whereon I shall be  
expected to play.





but this meets with cold lack of sympathy. I only meant to make things attractive in our new home when I cut many, many tiny bits out of the linoleum with the potato knife. But up-grows do not always interpret one correctly. I wrote a letter to Granddad on the bath room wall with a red pencil. This was the crisis. I got all that had been due me for something over a week. It was enough.

The hammer is lost.

A few warm days have come, and the gentleman who lives down stairs, having been in a state of hunger for the sight of something growing, planted a lawn on the foot-and-a-half-by-width-of-the-house that constitutes our front yard. He all but sat out there and held the lawn's hand to encourage its growth last autumn, they say; and as a result there are several blades of real grass there these April days. Well, I collected three of these blades and fed them to the baby belonging to the lawn. They almost choked her off the census. Very sorry. But I did not suppose she would be such a thoughtless girl as to take

them down the wrong pipe, when so many up-grown persons have tried the same thing before, and pronounced it a failure. I like her, though.

We are living a pleasant life, I think. Every once in a while some Marcelle Waves and Dinner Jackets come here to have a bite to eat with us. Among them is one I love. The first time he came to us was when we were just moved in, and, as a special favor, we let him lift trunks and find a roost for the winger. I was in bed, as I usually am when there are guests, but he came into my room, and, although he seemed embarrassed, he leaned over and kissed me. I put my arms around him and hugged him tight. They call this nice man Cortlandt.

"Uncle Cortlandt" has an automobile that he drives so fast you don't know he is on his way, until he has been sometime gone. I stand at our window and watch the hill that belongs in our street, hoping that he may scoot down it. I adore the scooting of Uncle Cortlandt's machine. Every time he comes to our house, this Uncle by courtesy kisses me, and when

They almost choked her till the corpse.





I meet him in large places like the hotel dining room, or the Country Club, I rush up and put my arms around him. He is fussed, but still I feel the warmth of his affection for me. I may be vain, but I believe he would rather have the kiss of me, and the discomfort of knowing people were smiling at him, than to be unnoticed among the many, without the kiss. I worship Uncle Cortlandt—he cuts in ahead of Grandparents, and stands next to train-cars.

"Uncle Worth" is another one who is near to me, but he is not quite so near as Mr. Cortlandt, because he is not so afraid that I will kiss him—and so afraid that I won't! He is a wee bit jealous of my adoration of Uncle Cortlandt, which helps his cause a lot. He is not my real uncle—he is just my real friend. But Uncle Worth sold his automobile, which detracts from any man's attractions.

Uncle Cortlandt found a toy motor-car in New York that is modeled after the lines of his own machine, and he sent it to me. At the next meeting of Marcelle Waves at our house, after the arrival of my car, they

made a race track of the dining table and had some speeding, allowing me to sit and see the fun, although I had my nighty on and my red felt slippers. But something went wrong with the bowsprit or something, and one of the Dinner Jackets put the car on the floor and tried to crawl under it, the way Uncle Cortlandt does under his car, to see what the matter was. It was fairly funny, because the car was six inches high, and the Dinner Jacket was six feet.

Father and I had a fine ride in the Cortlandt car at the Country Club one day. The horse-power was asleep, and one tire was sick—it had a bandage on it, though I know Uncle Cortlandt did not mean to hurt it. Father steered the machine, and a crowd of nine ragged little caddies pushed us three times around the club house. On the third lap, we tooted very hard, and the owner dashed out of the building and yelled to us that we'd better look out—he'd charge us for nine caddies for three rounds! Gracious—we could not afford it! We have to pay for a gas stove—but maybe Uncle Cortlandt doesn't know?

Besides a gas stove, we have a new Doctor. He's Mother's. I am glad she has him, but the other night when I wanted him because I had the croup, he was not to be found. I asked my Mother, why, if she couldn't get the Doctor, she didn't send for Uncle Cortlandt.

And some people try to say there is no such thing as faith cure!

Mother's Doctor does not take her very seriously. He frankly tells her she has a bad case of "ego and altitude," like so many people here who live at too high a pressure. Mother asked the Doctor if he did not think it might be a good idea for her to take up the piano again—(my! I dread this!)—and he replied sweetly, that he always felt it was better for a woman to pound the key-board, than to hammer on the fair reputation of her friends!

And what do you think? A piano has come to us! When we had about given up all hope of ever having one, a friend called us up and asked if we would not take his as a favor to him—he did not want to store it.

All Mother had to do to get a piano, after all, was simply—to wait. Men work for what they want; women—wait. But possibly it is work, and hard work, for some natures to wait? I daresay. I haven't thought of this before, but it may be so.

## CHAPTER XXI

THERE seems to have been a good deal of thinking going on at our house lately, on the part of my Mother. I have caught her mentally considering several things, principally myself. I am growing very hard to direct—I see it myself—and being very strong, and having my attention concentrated on my own purposes, it is no easy task to make me do the right thing. If there is a weak spot in the up-grown whose will is lined up against mine, I find it. I am hard to defeat. My Mother is realizing this, and it is just dawning upon her that the very traits of character she has blamed for her own failure, are going to beset her again, and even worse this time, in bringing me up.

The same little tendency Mother always had to day-dream—that same wee, vague notion that with or without her own efforts, everything would turn

out well in the end, is still part of her. When her career was in the making, she used to allow every available influence to interfere with the tiresome, daily routine of work. She had no system, but in its place—hope, or something equally indefinite. It all comes back to her in me. A Mother cannot shirk the daily exercise of forming a baby's character, any more than a singer can the daily routine of vocal exercises. It does not suffice to work one day, and then lose interest for three, and take up the struggle again, but lamely, on the fourth. And so, to do the simple, right thing, day after day, whether one feels inclined or not, is harder, much, than a brilliant spurt of achievement *now* and then. A now-and-then method with persons of helpless age, spells failure, indifferent results, and even worse things.

My Mother has vowed to herself that she will make a success of me. But how can she, if I am able to wear her out and defeat her on every point? And it is child nature to put forth untiring effort to this end. Sometimes it takes my tired Mother one hour, or

more, to make me pick up a piece of paper that I have thrown on the floor. At the end of the day, she is exhausted, and there seems to be nothing to show for the energy she has expended. It is too easy for Mothers to give up, or compromise on all issues with their children, or to carry their points by superior physical strength, and then it is hard for them to consider the picture they have made in condescending to this way of doing things.

I can see that it is not at all a path of roses to be the Mother of one.

On Wednesday the cat got a bath. So did the bath room! On Thursday she got a hair-cut that she did not thank me for. On Friday she left us. Sorry.

My Mother does not know how much I see into her mind. To-day we had a long and painful session about my wish to poke the eyes out of all the pictures in one of my books. Mother won, but she looked faint when at last she sank onto the couch and I, whimpering (a thing that in itself stifles her), put the book away, without her having had to lay hands on me.

Mother looked at me, steadily, with tearless eyes full of awful discouragement. Her lips did not move, but the words in her mind were, "I wonder if I could make you do what you ought to do, easier, if I had ever done it myself? I wonder which will cause me the more discomfort, to watch you make a failure of yourself, step by step, or to turn back now and make a success of myself, step by step, so that I can gain the power to make you amount to something? And—and I wonder if it is possible—" here a slight flush covered her paleness, "I wonder if I could bluff it?"

Silly hope! I stopped tearing out a bit of fringe from the edge of the rug at her feet, and looked her in the eye, honestly. It was just one of the little things that children do, without any appreciation of their significance. My Mother leaned forward and looked down at me. This time her lips moved, and she said in words, "I don't believe anybody in this world will ever be able to deceive you, and maintain the stand any length of time

—you are too clever. You see through me this minute!”

We smiled at each other, a comprehending smile, and one full of exquisite affection. We never hold our scenes against each other. Good idea, too.

And if you will believe me, a most terrifying thing followed! My Mother, nervous and exhausted from our problems, slowly got to her feet, and from her desk she unearthed a book of piano notes, on which it said “Exercises in Velocity.” She opened it at the first page. She made a start, and three bars out, she struck a discord. She jumped from her chair at the piano, as though some unseen hand had put a knife in her, and threw her hands over her face.

“Matter, Mummah?” I inquired, full of genuine concern.

“The matter, my son?” she repeated, bitterly. “The matter is this: I not only played the chord wrong, but I made exactly the same mistake I made—and left—seven years ago.”

I daresay it would have been the decent thing in

me to have let the over-wrought Mother alone, but again, this is not the child's way. She turned back to the piano, and this time, truly, I thought she might have hysterics, the struggle was so intense. But I was in no mood to listen to jerky, tuneless exercises. I begged for candy, and threatened to run away in the rain, and pulled at her forearms, and swung on the back of her chair. Indeed, I took this occasion to be quite full of demand, criticism, and complaint. I interrupted in every way known to persons of helpless age, and we know many that fill the up-grown soul with madness.

Over and over again, did my Mother try the finger exercises, each time making them worse listening than the time before, and the while I tormented her. At last her patience utterly deserted her, and she whirled on me, like a tigress.

"Diddle!" she cried, "can't you understand I am doing this for you?"

I trembled, for it did seem as though an awful spanking were about to descend upon me, but I am

no coward. I refused to take a backward step. All of a sudden the un-difficulness of ladies occurred to me. I fancy this knowledge came only just in time to save my life.

"Mummah," I pleaded, "Mine ist only came over here by the piano to get a kiss—and Mine must have it!"

I got it. One always does. Byn-bye, when we had a fine rock together in the big chair, my Mother said, softly, "Dicklet, won't you try to say Mother—not Mummah? It would help so much, really!"

"Mine says Mummah!" I replied, with a smile. It had been some time since we had had a round at our old game. Her answer was a sigh. But, sorry as I am, I still think Mummah a good name for a lady who likes to wear iron buckles.

The feet can be got off tin soldiers, if one is persistent enough in his efforts to amputate them. I thought you might like to know.

I have some new white kid gloves from Cousin Martha—just like Uncle Cortlandt's only smaller.

Uncle Cortlandt's ears get nice and red when I kiss him. I heard him say once that there were a few children in the world that he would keep trouble off of, if he could. I think I am one of them, but I am not certain whether or not he was referring to my white gloves when he said "trouble." I wore them to a party the other day, my first party, and the strain was something serious. When the hostess came forward to greet me, I held my white-gloved hands away from her lovely frock, her gorgeous pearls and her Marcelle wave. "Look out!" I warned her, sharply. "You might git-tum dirty!"

When Uncle Worth comes to our house, he comes into my room and kisses me, even if I am asleep, because he knows that in the morning I will ask my Mother if he did. It is nice of Uncle Worth, and if he would only buy back that automobile of his, and let his ears get a cheerful red once in a while, why—why, maybe I would—yet not! Not even then—not quite! But Uncle Worth stands next to Uncle Cortlandt, anyway.



Mother and I went out for a walk today, with  
only each other



I fell off a chair the other day, hard. I meant to shriek, in spite of the cold reception received by shrieks in our family, but I saw Mother open her mouth to make her customary remark, and so I said it for her. "F'r even's sake!" I stormed at myself. "That chile will kill herself, yet!" But this did not help the bump any.

One would think that this threat of Mother's to fortify herself to do justice to me, was about enough to happen at one time. But there are other things happening, too. It is almost as active, our life, as a moving picture show. Well, the worst is just this; our little plan to live Life safe, has taken a tumble, just like the one I took from the chair. Yes. After all of our efforts at being sure we were doing the best thing in coming to this camp to live, bag and baggage, Father's employer has failed. Isn't it too bad? For us, this means another gas stove and another physician to get away from, another horror of a week with people boxing up everything, but the things you want most, like the car-tracks. It means more train-

cars, and another start. For me, it means going away from Uncle Cortlandt. Uncle Worth won't have me to kiss. Mother says she will never again allow herself to grow attached to people in general, physicians in particular, places, or gas stoves. I suppose she will get over this, though.

Father has once more gone away to the far-off, and left us. Mother and I went out for a walk to-day, with only each other. We sat on the edge of a prospect hole, a little way out of town, and thought things over. The great Western mountains loomed up all around us, almost as if they wanted to hold us here. The lean cows that wander about the camp nibbling at the pebbles that lie around where grass would grow in other places, seemed important to us. The wrecked shaft-houses, standing out gaunt and lonely against the sky-line, seemed a part of us—and we a part of them. An automobile horn suggested Uncle Cortlandt, and he brought up a mental picture of Uncle Worth, who recalled other people.

I like the China-boy who takes our washing. He

*At last the Village-poll was taken our wedding.*





is only teasing about carrying me off in his basket! He would not do it—oh no!

Mother's heart was trying to tell her that we would rather sit and hold the winger between floors in that automatic elevator we once left, than to have to go away from all the Marcelle Waves and Dinner Jackets, and the Country Club, and the mountains. But I suppose we shall have to go where our living is, wherever that may be. We were having a bad attack of ego and altitude out on the edge of that prospect hole.

I looked at my Mother closely. The lines about her mouth were tightened, and her eyes were partly closed as she gazed off toward the hills. I touched her cheek, but she did not heed me.

"Mother?" I said, and the word was as well pronounced as though you, yourself, had said it. "Mother?"

She whirled on me almost fiercely, her hands on the ground, for she was still sitting on the edge of the prospect hole. "What did you say?" she demanded.

"I said Mother!" I told her, and in stooping to kiss her, I touched her throat.

The iron buckle was gone! Gone, too, was that merciless cloak that only she and I know she has worn. And I knew they would never come back, not even on windy nights. I don't know why I knew, but yet, I knew. And I was full of gladness.

"Say that again!" she commanded me.

"Mother!"

She took me by the shoulders, and looking me through and through, she said to me, "Son—you win! I give up—you're worth while—a thousand times worth while! I was only waiting for you to say my name before I owned it, but I knew the truth all the time."

If I have won, and she who is Daddy's little girl and my Mother, keeps me at winning, why—I fancy there really isn't anything further to say of the life of me—is there?







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